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Comments on Corpulency.

COMMENTS ON CORPULENCY

LINEAMENTS OF LEANNESS

MEMS ON
DIET AND DIETETICS.

By WILLIAM WADD, Esq. F.L.S.

Surgeon Extraordinary to the King,

etc. etc. etc.



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CORPULENCY.

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COMMENTS ON CORPULENCY.

“ ————— Ridentem dicere verum,
Quid vetat ? ”

THE celebrated traveller, Dr. Clarke, alluding to the pyramids of Egypt, says, “ the mind, elevated by wonder, feels at once the force of the axiom, which, however disputed, experience confirms,—that in Vastness, *whatever be its nature*, there dwells sublimity.” Why, therefore, may not the mountains of fat, the human Olympi and Caucasi, excite our attention? they *fill* a large space in society, are *great objects* of interest, and ought to afford us no *small matter* of amusement and instruction.

It is now nearly twenty years since I gave, in some “Cursory Remarks on Corpulence,”

an account of all the most conspicuous of these *mountaineers*, from the earliest period; and notwithstanding Mr. Malthus's theories for thinning the population, and my own for thinning the person, bodily bulk, or obesity, seems as much in fashion as ever: and, if we judge from the manner in which the jolly gentlemen of the age proclaim eternal war with Maigre and Lent, the march of fat-folks will, at any rate, keep pace with the march of intellect. Nor is it to be wondered at, when we consider the great improvement in the art of cookery, which has arrived at such perfection, as to bring within the compass of one stomach what nature provided for two.

“*Plures crapula quam gladius*” is an old adage, which, in a free translation, means, “Cookery depopulates like a pestilence;” and we have had doctors disseminating this plague, with as much moral culpability as illegitimate practitioners have the small-pox. This is no new doctrine; it is as old as the days of Seneca, who says, “*innumerabilis morbos mirabilis, coquos numera*,”—we cannot wonder at the number of diseases, when we re-

collect the number of cooks! For this reason, a celebrated modern physician, when visiting his opulent patients, never failed to pay his respect to the cooks. “My good friends,” he used to say, “accept my best thanks for all the kind services you render us physicians; were it not for you, and your pleasing poisons, the faculty would soon find themselves inhabitants of the workhouse.”

But let us speak with reverence of an art that is as old as king Cadmus; and let us recollect that Henry IV. of France was often in the kitchen; that a corps of missionary cooks have been considered the most powerful emissaries to convert the Brahmins; and that when the devil himself sends us a plague, in the shape of a bad cook, infernal malice can go no further.

“Que je puisse toujours après avoir dîné,
Bénir le cuisinier que le ciel m’a donné.”

Were we inclined to philosophise on this subject, we should say, that the portly show, the beautiful rotundity of Burke, and the serpentine line of Hogarth, which exist in

the fat worthies of this day, compared with those of former times, are in proportion to the superiority of modern over ancient cookery.

The *bon vivant* of our times turns shocked and disgusted from the black broth, pulse, and meagre fare of the ancients; and his refined taste bestows due contempt on the patriot who could dine on turnips! Agesilaus, Lycurgus, and Cincinnatus, may have been brave and wise, but would Brummel wish to dine with them?

Athens was little skilled in the higher branches of cookery; and even imperial Rome considered quantity more than quality. Lucullus, Apicius, and Cælius indeed deserved to have lived in the days of turtle, French sauces, and Kitchener—the great culinary censor of the age. He was, indeed, the “Oracle of Cooks.” No man ever possessed a tact of palate more certain, more delicate, or more infallible. He fed with the gravity of a senator, and tasted with the zeal of an artist, whose whole gustatory organs were employed in promoting the progress of his art. In the profundity of his reflections, he

usually took three or four hours to digest a peptic precept, or solve a dinner problem. Hence his opinions became oracular. From his decisions respecting whatever appertained to the art of alimentation there was no appeal. His opinion constituted law; and should it ever be possible to form a collection of such decisions, it will be hailed as the Epicurean code of the age.

It is the glory of modern cookery to bring within the scope of human purposes, by the exertion of skill, such viands as, in the dark days of Mrs. Glass, were utterly rejected. What could be expected of an old lady (who, by the bye, was Dr. Hill,) who commences her instructions by the sage advice of “first catch a fish,” which, in the Scotch editions, was altered to “first of all I wash my twa hands*?” Why, her recipes were little better

* When the troops under General Wade, in the year of the Rebellion 1745, found out the grand secret of turning oatmeal to account, one of the ——— regiment wrote to his mother, telling her that it was “a fine country they had got into, for the natives put a little water, thickened with sour oatmeal, into a pot, which,

than Sir Roger de Coverley's great grandmother's, which went no further than hasty-pudding and white-pot. In France the science of cookery is cherished and revered ; in this country we have not been without some very distinguished admirers and patronisers of Ventri potential Champions. Amongst others the great lexicographer, Dr. Johnson, who, on one occasion, in an ecstasy of satisfaction, exclaimed, " We could not have had a better dinner, had there been a *synod of*

in due time, with the blessing of God, came out a fine pudding !" (*i. e.* sowens.) On which they became both plump and strong. Hence arose the saying, that " It is the soup makes the soldier." "*C'est la soupe qui fait le soldat*" is also a French adage ; and though it may be difficult to decide their priority, there can be no question of the strong claims of the French troops in business of cookery. The English soldier lays his piece of beef at once on the coals ; by which means, one side of his strip of meat is made black, while the other seems, as it were, torn from the unhappy flanks of one of Bruce's bullocks : or, in other words, one half is lost, and the other burnt to a cinder. Whereas, six French troopers fling their rations into the same pot, which, like the Scotch sowens, comes out a nutritious soup and *bouilli*.

cooks.” But it is not every man that is born with the qualification necessary to constitute a first-rate cook. Monsieur Ude, who commands the “*batterie de cuisine*” with the genius of a *chef*, and who has written more profoundly than any of his predecessors, tells us, that “Cookery is an art which requires much time, intelligence, and activity, to be acquired in its perfection. Music, dancing, fencing, painting, and mechanics in general, possess *professors* under twenty years of age; whereas, in the first line of cookery, pre-eminence never occurs under thirty*.”

In these days of philosophical fancies, we read a man’s history and character at a single glance. As a craniologist will tell you his good or evil propensities, so a physician, by the expression of his visage, will say what he dines upon; and, moreover, what may not be generally known, that our personal beauty depends upon eating and drinking; the ugliness of the Calmucks being solely owing to their feasting on raw flesh,—an alarming piece of news to all eaters of (half-dressed)

* See *The French Cook*. 9th Edition.

beef, and a convincing proof of the importance of cookery. In truth, as many of our best physicians, and some of our ablest modern surgeons, have demonstrated, "that a healthy state of the body depends on the due regulation of diet," the importance of *judicious cookery* must be very evident*. Nay, the philosophy of some have carried them so far, as to conjecture that not only the health of the body corporate, but that the safety of the state is connected with this art. Ill-concocted viands not only produce commotions in the human bowels, but

"Convulsions and heats in the bowels of Europe:"

for it is an axiom sanctioned by the highest authority, that well-digested opinions are the

* Dr. Paris, who has treated on the subject of diet with the learning of a scholar and the science of a practical physician, tells us, "The nature of the fuel in Cornwall (furze) imparts a character to its cookery: thus the facilities of baking turns every article of food into *pies*." They have a proverb, "that the devil will not come into Cornwall, for fear of being put into a pie." Perhaps he does not like to associate with *crusty* people.

product of well-digested viands, and *vice versa*; from which it will appear, the domestic ordering of diet is as important a matter of administration as the *Materia Medica*; and that the Roman general who boiled his own turnips would, if he had had a cabbage to boil, have boiled it in two successive waters, as he had doubtless discovered that vegetables were "*fade*" and flatulent, unless freed from much noxious matter by culinary process.

Cicero says, "old age has no precise or determinate boundary,"—and many philosophers have thought, that men might live, like the patriarchs of old, for centuries, if they took proper means. Proper means! What do they mean by proper means? The answer is—cookery and diet.

"Caro animata cur vivit et non putrecit ut mortua? Quia quotidie renovatur."—SANCTORIUS.

Hippocrates, the great father of the medical and chirurgical art, laid much stress, and wrote largely upon diet. But, during the last century, medical men thought it neces-

sary to apologise for treating on these subjects: since, however, local complaints have been found to be intimately connected with constitutional influences, surgery has taken an enlarged sphere, and they are now entertained as both *proper* and pleasant.

Fashion, which holds an undivided empire over the frivolous concerns of life, extends its influence even to the healing art:

“ Il y a de la mode jusque dans la médecine.”

Thus we find fashionable complaints—fashionable remedies—fashionable seats of disease—and fashionable plans of treatment. Half a century ago, “nervous complaints” were the *ton*. These were superseded by “liver complaints,”—and these again have yielded the palm to “stomach complaints.” “Duodenal complaints” are beginning to be talked of in London—while the hypochondriacs of Bath have their fashionable localities: so that, at present, the seat of alimentary complaints depends on the accidental circumstance of the patient’s residence.

Formerly, we sought the phenomena of

insanity in the head and brain—the causes of cough in the lungs and pleura;—but, “*nous avons changé tout cela*,” we look into the head for the causes of hooping-cough, and for the causes of insanity we search the bowels and stomach. In fact, the stomach is charged (now a-days) with one-half the complaints of mankind; and, amongst others, the complaint in question, *viz.* Obesity—notwithstanding some fanciful properties given to the colon, as to the secretion of fat. Sir Anthony Carlisle says, that long-continued experience has taught him that the first effects of senility are to be traced to the stomach, and that many incipient disorders are to be sought for in the evidence of the stomach, and its dependencies. But there is nothing surprising in all this:—the ancients considered it the seat of our noblest faculties and affections, of pride and courage. Persius called it the dispenser of genius;—from the sacred writings we learn, that the Hebrews considered it the head quarters of intellect; and the Hindoos, one of the most religious nations

of the East, even at this hour, reverence it as the seat of thought:—whence, it has been humorously conjectured, that beasts with *two* stomachs, came originally to be called *ruminating* animals *par excellence*.

During the reign of *nerves*, camphor-julep and cordials were in vogue. When the popular hypothesis about the *liver* prevailed, mercurial drugs were lavished in a manner that made Dr. Reynolds predict that calomel would be taken by the tea spoonful. “*Peptic precepts*” perhaps prevented it. The chylopoietic functions put in their claims; and then every body suddenly discovered that they had a stomach! “Don’t you think,” said an hypochondriac to me one day, that *dyspepsia* has wonderfully increased of late!” adding, at the same time, “By the bye, what is *dyspepsia* *?”

Although gastric disorders and gastric doctrines at present engross the thoughts, and

* Lord Collingwood said, “Do you know what a *dyspepsy* is? I’ll tell you. It is the disease of officers who have grown tired: they get invalided for *dyspepsy*.”

employ the pens of all denominations of persons, yet they are by no means novelties. The stomach has been the subject of complaint from the earliest ages. The rich man has complained that his stomach would not allow him to eat *any thing*: the poor man, that it ate *every thing*, and was never satisfied. And the good Erasmus complained, that, in spite of all his Catholic propensities, his stomach would be Lutheran: and, moreover, a very learned and ancient physician specifically treated this affair, in a grave work entitled "*Ventriculi querelæ et opprobria*." In truth, it has been satisfactorily proved, that, in every stage of human life, health and disease, pleasure and pain, and even life and death, are dependent on the functions of the stomach.

An old English adage says, "it is the stomach makes the legs amble, and not the legs the stomach." Shakspeare knew its importance and powers well; Fontenelle magnanimously avowed, that there was no enjoying life without a good one—"pour bien jouir de la vie, il faut avoir un mauvais cœur, et

un *bon estomac*;" and *Serenus Samonicus*, many centuries before, says—

“ Qui *stomachum* regem totius corporis esse
Contendunt, vera niti ratione videntur.”

In the vagaries of modern philosophy, it contends for the seat of the soul; and naturalists have gone so far as to make it the organ of civilization, from the fanciful hypothesis, that animals submit to domestication in proportion to the subjection in which their will is held by their appetite: certain it is, that the stubborn and rebellious are remarkable for their indifference to the pleasures of the table; and that “short commons” and insubordination are uniform, as cause and effect, upon the principle, no doubt, of Sancho Pancha’s reasoning, that “when the stomach is full the bones will be resting.”

The variation in the capacities and powers of living organs—the peculiarities and deviations from the ordinary course of the human constitution, or what has been termed *idiosyncrasy*, particularly as relating to the stomach, affords much amusing “*matériel*.”

We find sometimes very stout, strong persons, particularly Northern cousins, from some peculiar idiosyncrasy, or some meagrim in the chylopoietic functions, cannot endure certain of the most agreeable and innocent articles of food; thus fish, flesh, fowl, butter, cheese, bacon, and good red-herring, each in its turn, is despised and loathed. It puzzles philosophy to account for some of these whimsicalities. As for instance, why a man six feet high should faint away at the sight of a shoulder of mutton; why another tall gentleman should have *muttonic* aversions so great, as to be able to point a mutton-pie, as a pointer would a partridge;—while a third “Herculean delicate,” minces his meat, and puts aside all fat, gristle, and skin, with the fastidiousness of a puny school-girl.

Another peculiarity that excites our astonishment, is the variety in the capacity and power of the stomach, which enables one man to swallow the whole of another man’s grievance,—for there are those who would eat an entire shoulder of mutton in as little time as his *anti-muttonic* neighbour would be

recovering from the sight of it*. Much of both these evils arises from the error of early education, and the force of habit; and both are to be controlled, or at any rate moderated, by the will, as might be illustrated by some singular examples.

Some men have appeared with the digestive powers of a double stomach, to which the grinding properties of a gizzard seemed superadded. They may have been considered as "*nati consumere fruges*," and in the scale of living animals, ought to have been ranked with the cormorant or the ostrich. Of these, Marriot, the great eater of Gray's Inn, was a conspicuous instance. He increased his natural capacity for food by art, and had as much vanity in eating to excess, as any monk ever had in starving himself. Nicholas Wood, mentioned in Fuller's Worthies, was another example of great prowess†.

* It is recorded on the tomb-stone of James Parsons, buried at Teddington, March 7, 1743, that he had often eaten a whole shoulder of mutton, and a peck of hasty pudding.

† Perhaps the most whimsical case that the records

Amongst the fanciful discoveries of Phrenology is the organ of *gustativeness*, which

of private practice afford, is one that occurred to Dr. Miller, of Doncaster, who received a letter, stating the extraordinary fact, that a gentleman had *swallowed his whole wardrobe!* This unfortunate person was no less than the celebrated George Alexander Stevens. The medical reader will, doubtless, be as much startled as Dr. Miller, and expect a serious detail from the "Lecturer on Heads." In this he will be disappointed; and though the facts of the case may not help our physiology, further than as a proof that "hunger sharpens wit," yet our philosophy may receive a moral lesson from the miseries of genius, or at any rate its cleverness and address, as an attack upon humanity, may prove an apology for its intrusion. After saying that he was "about to eat his last waistcoat," he continues: "Themistocles had many towns to furnish his table, and a whole city bore the charge of his meals. In some respects I am like him, for I am furnished by the labours of a multitude. A wig has fed me two days; the trimming of a waistcoat as long: a pair of velvet breeches paid my washerwoman; and a ruffled shirt has found me in shaving. My coats I swallowed by degrees: the sleeves I breakfasted upon for weeks; the body, skirts, &c., served me for dinner two months. My silk stockings have paid my lodgings; and two pair of new pumps enabled me to smoke several

one great authority asserts "rules our love of eating;" whilst another maintains, that it

pipes. It is incredible how my appetite (barometer like) rises, in proportion as my necessities make their terrible advances. I here could say something droll about a good stomach; but it is ill jesting with edge tools, and, I am sure, that is the sharpest thing about me. You may think I can have no sense of my condition, that, while I am thus wretched, I should offer at ridicule: but people constitutioned like me, with a disproportioned levity of spirits, are always most merry when they are most miserable; and quicken like the eyes of the consumptive, which are always brightest the nearer the patient approaches dissolution. However, to show you I am not lost to all reflection, I think myself poor enough to want a favour, and humble enough to ask it here. I might make an encomium on your good-nature, humanity, &c.; but I shall not pay so bad a compliment to your understanding, as to endeavour, by a parade of phrases, to win it over to my interest. If you could any night, at a concert, make a small collection for me, it might be a means of my obtaining my liberty; and you well know, the first people of rank abroad will perform the most friendly offices for the sick: be not, therefore, offended at the request of a poor (though a deservedly punished) debtor."

"GEO. ALEXANDER STEVENS."



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Pauper Apicius.

“guides our palates as to flavours.” Whether this *discovery* overturns or confirms the old adage of “*de gustibus non*,” phrenologists must decide. The annexed sketch is the portrait of a voracious pauper, who had a very strangely-shaped head, with a large loose scalp, which has been noticed by Haslam, and others, though not as indicative of *poluphagian* propensities.

These morbid or extravagant propensities of English stomachs, lead us very naturally to believe, that their late majesties from the Sandwich Isles, might, as was reported of them, pick the bones of a good-sized pig; or that an Esquimaux may dine very daintily on a slice of a whale, a Russian on tallow, or, what is still more revolting to our notions, that African gentlemen should eat one another!

Humanity shudders at this barbarous and savage practice, and some humane physiologists have questioned the power of the stomach to digest human flesh, and doubted the existence of Anthropophagi; while others, who are *latitudinarians*, not only allow it

omnivorous powers, but affirm that the stomach, in some instances, has been known to eat itself! This, with the feats performed some years ago by the stone-eater, who gave alarming indications of wishing to devour the marble Father Thames, then just put up in the square at Somerset House, may be considered the very *ne plus ultra* of digestion.

The existence of Anthropophagi, however, is but too true; and when, for the sake of humanity, we had hoped that the practice was on the decline, we are shocked at hearing, that in a neighbouring country, symptoms of cannibalism have appeared, the lamentable result, no doubt, of the high price of provisions; for the "Journal de Perpignan" contains a detailed account of a family of cannibals being arrested so near our own home as France. But we have another melancholy proof of the existence of this propensity, in people who have not the excuse of the high price of provision, given by John Anderson, Esq., who went lately on a *Mission* to the Coast of Sumatra. He found what might be considered the fashion-

ables of that part of the world, so vitiated in their appetites, that they could relish no other food; and that they would have swallowed the Missionary much sooner than his doctrines. The royal person who ruled over them was always afflicted with a pain in his stomach, whenever he ate any other than human flesh. A bit of an enemy was considered a treat; and whenever his majesty went to war, besides the ready "*sauce piquante*" of malignant feelings, he was furnished with salt and lemon-juice.

The Calif Merwan II. it is said, could never see a sheep without wrapping his hand in the corner of his robe, and tearing out the kidney, which he instantly devoured. After eating his *bonne bouche*, he used to call for a clean habit; and, in consequence of this becoming attention to personal neatness, when he died, ten thousand greasy vests were found in his wardrobe.

It does not, however, appear that these Anthropophagi were corpulent, any more than the French prisoner, who ate sixteen pounds of raw beef, and other great consumers of meat;

whose histories prove, that the “*cœnas sine sanguine*,” of Horace, possessed more *materia pinquefaciendi*.

But we are not without an instance, in our own history, of Cannibal Epicurism. Richard Cœur de Lion, in his wars with the infidels, being dangerously ill, took a violent longing for pork. As, however, there was no “Pig Ordinary,” no “Pig and Beehive” in the neighbourhood, none could be obtained, and his attendants thought themselves justified in committing a “*pious fraud*,” by roasting a fine plump young Saracen, which was served to the sick prince as a roasted pig! Whether it was dished up in the high style of the ancient *Porcus Trojanus*, is not mentioned, but Richard relished his dinner, recovered his illness, and was ever after remarkably fond of roast pork!

While we congratulate ourselves on the diminution of mortality, which has accompanied the improvements in the condition of society, our pleasure is alloyed by the reflection, that considerable deduction is to be made in our estimate, according to the

mercantile phrase, of profit and loss, by the increase of a set of diseases, which are to be attributed to the augmentation of national wealth, with its concomitants, luxury and high-living*.

Thus, instead of finding the annual bills of mortality announcing in the deadly list, plague, pestilence, and famine—not forgetting small-pox—we read gout, apoplexy, palsy, and even obesity, and a host of minor evils connected with repletion.

Among the grievous calamities incident to corpulency, noticed in a former publication, was its susceptibility of contagion, and its proneness to combustion; and an instance was mentioned, of a French lady whose fat

* Though in the progress of refinement, we are surprised at the Abyssinians eating raw flesh; scarce two centuries ago the French nation were equally surprised at our eating *oysters*! for Didelot, ambassador to Henry III. of France, being asked, by that monarch, what he had seen remarkable in England? answered, that besides drinking out of boots, viz. *black jacks*, and strewing their best rooms with *hay*, they actually eat *some of their fish alive*!

ignited. The Margravine of Bareith also notices a fat French princess who melted after she was embalmed. I have since discovered, in the Chronicles of Cromwell's time, that these combustible materials in man were turned to good account in those days; and that a woman who kept a tallow chandler's shop in Dublin, made all her best candles from the fat of Englishmen; and when one of her customers complained of their not being so good as usual, she apologised by saying, "Why, ma'am, I am sorry to inform you, that, for this month past, I have been short of Englishmen."

Another inconvenience to which the corpulent must submit, is the being debarred equestrian exercise, and the difficulty of transportation from place to place, which may be illustrated by the following anecdotes, of late occurrence:—

Mr. B——, of Bath, a remarkably large, corpulent, and powerful man, wanting to go by the mail, endeavoured to secure a place a short time before it started. Being told it was full, he still determined to get admission, and opening

the door, which no one near him venturing to oppose, he got in. When the other passengers came, the ostler reported that there was a gentleman in the coach; he was requested to come out, but having drawn up the blind, he remained quiet. Hearing, however, a consultation on the means of making him alight, and a proposal to "pull him out," he let down the blind, and, laying his enormous hand on the edge of the door, asked, who would dare to pull him out, drew up the blind again, and, waiting some time, fell asleep. About one in the morning he awoke, and, calling out to know whereabouts he was on the journey, he perceived, what was the fact, that, to end the altercation with him, the horses had been put to another coach, and that he had spent the night at the inn door at Bath, where he had taken possession of the carriage.

A similar occurrence took place lately at Huddersfield. A gentleman went to a proprietor of one of the coaches to take a passage for Manchester; but, owing to the enormous size of his person, he was refused, unless he

would consent to be taken as lumber, at ninepence per stone, hinting at the same time the advantage of being split in two. The gentleman was not to be disheartened by this disappointment, but adopted the plan of sending the ostler of one of the inns to take a place for him, which he did, and, in the morning, wisely took the precaution of fixing himself in the coach, with the assistance of the bystanders, from whence he was not to be removed easily. Thus placed, he was taken to his destination. The consequence was, on his return, he was necessitated to adopt a similar process, to the no small disappointment of the proprietors, who were compelled to convey three gentlemen, who had previously taken their places, in a chaise, as there was no room beside this gentleman, who weighs about thirty-six stone!

The Gentoos have a hole at the top of their houses for an entrance, through which a corpulent man could not pass. Any man who is too big to get through, they think has not got rid of his sins.

The King of Persia has an Officer to

superintend the size of his subjects, who is called "*Forma Corporis Estimator*," and whose business it is to measure and diet the unwieldy ones. We have in this country, at certain fashionable places, an "*Arbiter Elegantiarum*," but, unluckily, the application of the "Regulation Girdle" is not one of his duties.

In enumerating the little miseries of the corpulent, their exposure to ridicule should not be forgotten. Even the austerity of Queen Elizabeth could relax into a joke on the fat Sir Nicholas Bacon, whom she was classically pleased to define as "*Vir præpinguis*," observing "right merrilie," "Sir Nicholas's soul lodged well." The good-humoured antiquary, Grose, was earnestly entreated by a butcher to say "he bought meat of him!" "God bless you, Sir," said the paviours to the enormous Cambridge professor, as he passed over their work. Christopher Smart, the translator of Horace, celebrated the three fat beadles of Oxford; and the fat physician, Dr. Stafford, was not

allowed to rest in his grave without a witticism :

“ Take heed, O good trav’ller, and do not tread hard,
For here lies Dr. Stafford, *in all this church-yard.*”¹¹

Our good King Edward IV. even made a practical joke with the Corporators of London; for when he invaded France, in 1475, he took care to be accompanied by some of the most corpulent Aldermen of London, “ *Les bourgeois de Londres les plus chargés de ventre,*” that the fatigues of war might the sooner incline them to call out for peace.

Many illustrious cases might have been found in France equal to the specimens Edward took with him, even among royal and noble persons—of which Charles the Fat, Louis le Gros, Sanctius Crassus, and “ *Corpus Poetarum,*” the fat poetic Elector of Cologne, were notable instances.

In the court of Louis XV. there were two very fat noblemen, the Duke de L——, and the Duke de N——. They were both at the levee one day, when the king began to rally

the former on his corpulency: "You take no exercise, I suppose," said the king. "Pardon me, Sire," said de L——, "I walk twice a day round my cousin de N——." About the same time the French Queen, in a haughty tone, demanded of a fat French wit, "*Quand il accoucherait?*"—" *Quand j'aurais trouvé une sage femme,*" was the ready reply, which stopped further interrogatories. Nor ought we to omit, among other minor *personal* disadvantages of these great personages, the expense of clothing; and the inconvenience that has been known to arise from the likeness of one fat man to another, which, during the search for Georges, in France, harassed all the fat people from one end of Gaul to the other.

Having hitherto treated the subject in "merry mood," let us now look at it in a more serious way. Fat is, of all the humours or substances forming part of the human body, the most diffused; a certain proportion of it is indicative of health, and denotes being in good condition—nay, is even conducive to

beauty; but when in excess—amounting to what may be termed OBESITY—it is not only in itself a disease, but may be the cause of many fatal effects, particularly in acute disorders. Many able medical writers of the last century attributed serious evils to the local as well as the general derangements that occasionally take place in fat. Many of these might be “whims of a day, and theories of an hour”—fancies dependant on the then physiological and pathological theories, but they speak very positively to certain facts.

Monsieur Lorry, a celebrated French physician, indulged in some curious speculations relative to acute diseases, arising from the admixture of bile, milk, or pus, with fat in a fluid state. Either of these uniting with the last, in certain conditions of the body, would produce a sort of “*tertium quid*,” in the shape of a soapy liquor, causing acute diseases in some, and chronic diseases in others; and persons have been supposed to die of consumption when, in fact, they were

washed away to the other world by their own soap*! Pus and fat, mixing together in a gland, became, according to this doctrine, as

* There is no substance in the human body, M. Lorry observes, more active in reducing fat than pus. Pus mixed with fat gives it the *solubility of soap*. A purulent mass and a fatty mass, mixed together, unite with uncommon promptitude. The first effect of this liquefied mass is to produce high-coloured hot urine, which in a few minutes becomes turbid, like badly made soap, when dissolved. It acquires an insupportable odour, and deposits very little red sediment. There floats upon the surface an oily substance, imitating, in colour, the rainbow, the *putrid volatility of which is so strong as to affect the eyes*. The patient feels an oppression about the chest, and difficulty of breathing, which is a little relieved by spitting up a yellow bloody phlegm. Frequently, erysipelatous spots appear on the skin, and become hard; sometimes even the muscular, parts become hard, as if penetrated by these spots; in a few days the eyes become yellow, the liver inflamed, and painful. This threatens jaundice, which, if it terminates successfully, is carried off by copious bilious evacuations. Hippocrates remarks, that the crisis is fatal, if it happens before concoction, or if the evacuation does not lessen the bulk of the patient, by discharging the whole of the soapy basis of the fat, that has the character of bile. The liver acts as a depu-

active as gunpowder, and generally ended in a sort of critical explosion, in the shape of an abscess: the *omentum*, as might be supposed, was a frequent seat of these combustions. This is confirmed by a celebrated English accoucheur—no less a person than Dr. Leake, physician to the Westminster Lying-in Hospital, and celebrated throughout Europe for his *Pilula Salutaris*, who, in a book published 1775, describes a species of epidemic fever, that appeared among the pregnant patients, which he attributed to *suppuration of the omentum*. Nor is the mixture of milk and fat, according to these authorities, less terrific. Notwithstanding they both take their principal properties from the aliment, and ought to assimilate, they quarrel desperately when they come in contact, which occasionally arises from a metastasis of milk to the principal seats of fat, particularly the *omentum* and loins.

ratory organ to the fat, receiving and evacuating the corrupted humours, and may be considered, according to this ancient doctor, in these cases, as the emunctory of the fat.

It is admitted that corpulent people, when in a state of health, secrete less bile than others; yet, from accidental causes, such as acute diseases, they engender a vast quantity; and it appears as if the liver assumed the power of manufacturing the fat into bile. This gives rise to green bile, black bile, bilious vomitings, and a thousand symptoms not to be enumerated; and the great Ruysch is even found indulging in some fanciful notions, which involve the Fallopian tubes in the consequences of some of these biliary vagaries.

The immediate action of bile upon fat is not perhaps capable of strict proof, though there are a variety of phenomena not easily accounted for on any other principle. Nothing reduces a corpulent person so rapidly as those sudden bilious evacuations that take place in hot weather. Who has not seen, in what is called the "plum season," a combustion take place, commonly charged to the account of the innocent fruit, that, in the short space of a few days, transforms a fat friend into a delicate dandy? It is, in fact, a bilious, adipo-

sical diarrhœa; and those who have looked into the matter very closely, have detected fat with the bile; and some keen pursuers of animal chemistry have asserted that a fatty substance may be obtained from bile.

Some French physicians have thought that acids gave a character to fat; and it has been questioned, whether the crude acid, found in the *primæ viæ*, in some cases of debility, and in the weakness of infancy, do not occasionally produce very active constitutional diseases.

Sir Anthony Carlisle, who has paid great attention to the effects of acids, and has given a scientific analysis of acid substances, says, "that acids not only act upon the stomach and its contents, but they likewise pervade the whole body." Many people are affected with pimples shortly after taking acids; very many are affected with burning heat in the face, immediately after taking vinegar; gouty pains, spasms, and itching over the whole body, are inevitable consequences of the taking acids, with a great portion of mankind. My own father was a singular example of the deleterious effects of acids; and he found, from

experience, so much relief from preparations of chalk, that he was never without a box of the *Creta preparata* in his pocket.

Alimentary acidities are also the causes of erysipelas, and many herpetic diseases; and those who are subject to eruptions on the face, experience a sensible aggravation immediately after taking acids.

External heat may be ranked among the causes that alter fat. Fat people are much incommoded by any sudden transition from cold to heat. In a very hot season, if a fat person undergoes violent exercise, it is possible for the fat not only to become putrid, and produce petechial fever, but it may become in some parts rancid and soapy, particularly after a previous dry season—at least, so says Monsieur Lorry.

Aromatic substances are also supposed to give a character to fat. From the aptitude of fat to imbibe aromatic particles, it is natural for it to partake of the qualities of the aliment. Thus the odour from the fat of those who live solely on animal food is very foetid; so with birds, living entirely on fish.

It is reported of the French prisoner, who eat many pounds of animal food in the course of the day, that it was scarcely possible to approach him. The odour of garlick remains with those who have eaten it for many days.

Mr. Hunter says, " The essential oils of vegetables and animals, indigestible, are soluble either in gastric juice or chyle, by which means they become medicinal, from their stimulating powers. The essential oil of vegetables, but more particularly that of animals, would seem to pervade the very substance of those animals whose food contains much oil. Thus, we find sea-birds, whose constant food is fish, taste very strongly of fish; and those who live on that kind of food only during certain times of the year, as the wild duck, have that taste only at such seasons. This fact is so well known, that it was hardly necessary to put it to the test of an experiment; yet, I took two ducks, and fed one with barley, the other with sprats, for about a month, and killed them both at the same time: when they were dressed, the one fed only on sprats was hardly eatable, it tasted so strongly of

fish.”—HUNTER’S *Observations on Digestion*, p. 177.

From the preceding detail, it would appear that the pathological examination of fat furnishes us much matter for reflection on the changes that may be produced in fat, in the living state, by the process of digestion, as also the probable causes of the transmutation of diseased appearances, and the sudden change that sometimes takes place in the character of acute diseases.

Leaving these discussions to the doctors, for “*Non nostrum inter vos tantas componere lites*,” we shall proceed to the object of our inquiry, *viz.* Corpulency, and its consequences.

CASES.

“ Monstro, quod ipse tibi possis dare.”

JUVENAL.

WE have now to illustrate the preliminary remarks; this will be best effected by extracts from the communications of correspondents. The first extract is from a very sensible, well-informed, studious friend. He gives a succinct account of his feelings, presenting an outline, or sketch, of which every practitioner in the metropolis could produce a duplicate; and every respectable medical man could, doubtless, furnish a more highly-finished portrait than this, and those which follow it. Be it so; I shall present my collection as I would portraits of another description, feeling that those who could give a better delineation and colouring of the facts of my portfolio, are the persons who will receive with the greatest latitude this attempt at portraying characters, which, from their very nature, approach to caricature.



W Wadd
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Comments on Corpulency.

CASE I.

Extract of a Letter from —, Esq.

“ You have long known that I experienced much inconvenience from that *embonpoint* appearance, for which the weak and ignorant are so apt to congratulate and flatter a person. Inactivity, somnolency, depression of spirits, great nervousness, as it is popularly called, but, above all, an unwillingness, or rather inaptitude for long-continued study, were symptoms of disease which I found very much increase; and from all the attention I was able to give to the subject—from what I had heard and read—but, above all, from its coinciding with your opinion, I was at last perfectly confident, that these symptoms principally arose from a too great accumulation of fat. It was not difficult for me to account for this accumulation, even supposing there was no natural tendency to it in my constitution. From earliest childhood I was more inclined to read than to play, and when at school, though not wanting mental activity, and pos-

sessing considerable boldness of spirits, I was averse, and of course totally unskilled in all boyish amusements, as cricket, trap-ball, &c. This partly arose from my being at that period in a bad state of health, but chiefly from having early received the strongest impetus towards the attainments of knowledge, and the ambition connected with it.

“Sedentary occupations engrossed my whole time; nor did I relax from my temperate habits, which approached to ascetic severity, till I became a student of the Temple, when I was led to indulge in all the luxuries of the age, though never in the least remitting every attention to literary attainments. Possessing, at the same time, strong powers of digestion, and being partial to the most succulent aliment, as sugar, butter, milk, &c.—it is easy to foresee the consequence; I became extremely corpulent.

“I had approached my thirtieth year, however, before I experienced any great inconvenience from my increasing bulk. Since that period I have suffered much, and at intervals have made some attempts to reduce it, but

they were feeble, and not continued for any length of time. In fact, my mind was in a state of indecision on the subject, arising, like all other indecision, from the want of clear and distinct ideas, and the consequent conviction. The comparative advantage of animal or vegetable food to the general constitution of man, or to particular habits, is (strange to tell!) not yet ascertained. By far the greater part of the medical tribe are satisfied with attending only to actual disease, as being the only source of profit, while the preventive part, though far the most important, but as furnishing no emolument, is generally disregarded." From this general philippic, however, he exempted Brown, Darwin, and Beddoes, whose theories he was well acquainted with, and whom he was pleased to say, stood as "noble columns in the dreary waste."

"Here, then, was my difficulty,—I was very nervous. This arose from debility, from a want of vigour in the system. Animal food (the durable stimulant of Brown) communicates greatest strength. I tried animal

food for a month, without any mixture of vegetable, eating very hearty and drinking pretty freely, but not to great excess. All my complaints increased, my nervousness in particular. It was natural, then, to inquire whether this nervousness was not caused, or at least increased, by the weakness and other effects arising from my *corpulence*.

“ I determined then to make trial, at least, of a vegetable diet, which I did (with two or three exceptions) for six weeks. I did not, in any respect, stint myself at first; I generally drank ale, sometimes brandy and water, at my meals. I found a pint of ale at night necessary to sleep, sometimes with onions, sometimes without. I became much lighter, more inclined to continual mental exertion, but did not, in the course of a *month*, become in *the least degree thinner*. I reduced my quantity both of eating and drinking, and in a *week* was evidently *much thinner*, but found myself very feeble, and little capable of exercise. I attributed this, however, to the mere effect of *change*; and, as I found my spirits good, determined to persevere. I did so for

another week ; my debility increased, and I was attacked by a violent *diarrhœa*, which, I should observe, was at that time (August) very prevalent. It left me extremely low, and I felt much dread at returning to a vegetable diet, and I returned to my usual course of living. My complaints again returned ; I was soon fatter, had bad nights, was lethargic, and felt generally uneasy, and unfit for any usual exercise of body or mind."

Observations.—The variation in this gentleman's health, from an alternate change in his regimen, was of a very decided character ; and so long as he was *temperate*, he was free from the various evils that tormented him, which, the reader will easily discover, were allied to what are familiarly termed the "*blue devils*." But he was of too sanguine a temperament to be temperate ; he was intemperate in fasting as well as in feasting ; and he adopted and put in practice the theory of the day with the zeal of an enthusiastic partisan. As he grew older, he became more decided in his personal dietetical experiments.

I have many letters of a similar nature, at

different periods, in which he discusses the subject of health, all of which demonstrate, like the man in the Spectator, he was constantly destroying what he was most anxious to preserve. He read himself into one complaint, which he cured by reading himself into another. At one time he would only take food once a day; this was altered to the other extreme, eating little and often; and then he provided himself with gingerbread nuts and biscuits. For three weeks, the hour of dining was regulated, not by the clock, but the state of the stomach; the dinner was to be served, at any hour, from noon till midnight, when the gastric juices were ready. At another period, he instituted a scheme of rules, by which every thing was regulated by weight; and though he did not follow them with the minuteness of Sanctorious, they evince much zeal and perseverance.

By a journal he kept, during the summer of 1816, he was successful in his attempts to reduce his bulk. This is applicable to our subject. It records—

“ June 10. Weighed 16st. 10oz.

June 31. „ 16 1.

“ During these 21 days the diet chiefly vegetables, milk, and tea.

“ July 7. Weighed 16st.

July 21. „ 14 11lbs.

July 30. „ 14 4.”

At this period he became ill, having been seduced from his plans by an accidental debauch, when in a state least fitted for it. He confesses, in a note, that he rewarded his resolution, by a violent outrage on his stomach, eating all kinds of improper things, and suffering accordingly. From the manner in which he apostrophises a French pie, it appears to have distributed indigestion to the whole party of conviviais, who led him astray.

Two months elapsed before he resumed his plans. In the mean time he had increased a few pounds. At the end of September he resumed his course of vegetable diet. He begins his journal with a pithy observation from his favourite, Dr. Beddoes—“ No one should be content with his stomach till he has recovered that power of digesting vegetables, which it possessed in the light and joyous

spring of life, and which it retains to old age, when uninjured by accident or imprudence.”

“ September 5. Weighed 14st. 12lbs.

September 19. „ 14 8

October 20. „ 14 3

November 5. „ 14 1

November 21. „ 13 11”

Here the journal is continued, but so intermixed with personal reflections, that it assumes the detail of hypochondriacal thoughts and feelings, and is a very interesting document; but it ceases to be applicable to the points in question, and only gives us a notion of some of the phantasies of “a mind diseased.”

CASE II.

From a fat Sportsman.

“ Having had some conversation with you upon the subject before, and hearing that you have made it a matter of study, I am desirous of inquiring your opinion further—as to the safety and treatment by which weight may be diminished by *medicine*.

“ I am growing heavier and fatter than I wish to be (my ordinary weight, a few years ago, was fifteen stone, and I am now increased to nineteen). The exercise I take does not prevent it at all. *I should not quite like to be put on a regimen of abstinence*, but upon some system which, with moderate living, might gradually bring me back to about my old standard. All this time I am quite well, and should have little to complain of, were I not fond of sports which I pursued with greater convenience when I was thinner, and did I not observe that persons inclined to increase in size lose their activity rather too soon in life.”

Observations.—This gentleman was an ardent sportsman, took excessive exercise, went through great exertion every morning, and in the afternoon rewarded his virtuous labours by eating, drinking, and sleeping—the fatigue of his sporting pleasures being previously sustained by an occasional draught of stout ale. He did me the favour of a visit, when I found, as he had stated, that he was in excellent health, but his size interfered

with his plans—"he could not get through the woods so easily as he used to do," and "it was not so easy as formerly to find a horse to carry him." "Now what do you recommend me to do?"—"Keep your eyes open, and your mouth shut." "Poh! nonsense! that won't do for me—give me *something to take*—have you no pills?" The same question has been so often repeated to some very able practitioners, that, with Molière's doctor, they answer,—"*Prenez des pillules, Prenez des pillules.*"

The pills this gentleman was in search of, were to counteract the effects of *a dose of strong ale*, two gallons a day being his moderate allowance. As he was not only a merry fellow but a scholar, I gave him the opinion of an old poet on the subject of ale:—

———— Nil spissius illa,
Dum bibitur, nil clarius dum mingitur, inde
Constat, quod multas fæces in corpore linquat.

He laughed, and replied with great good humour, "I see how it is—if I am *ale-ing* all day, it follows of course, I must be *ail-ing* all

night. Egad ! I can't help it, I should die without it, and I had rather die with it."

It is incredible the quantity of malt liquor that men swallow, sometimes to the amount of many gallons. The Welsh are great consumers of ale ; and it is recorded of a Welsh squire, Wm. Lewis, who died in 1793, that he drank *eight gallons* of ale per diem, and weighed forty stone ; which, for the reasons stated in the Latin verses, is not improbable.

This *Vinum Britannicum*, borrowed from the Egyptians, was originally patronised by the Welsh, and has subsequently been considered the natural beverage of Englishmen. I have known some honest Cambrians, who, like Boniface, "ate it and drank it," and would continue drinking it under constitutional derangements that would have killed an ordinary man.

"Nothing will stay on my stomach," said an old toper, "but beef-steaks and Hodgson's ale !—What do you think of my stomach, eh ! doctor ?"—"Why I think your stomach a very sensible stomach !" was the equivocal reply.

CASE III.

From a Country Practitioner.

“ I should before have replied to your letter of the 31st ult. had I not been waiting to see the person whose case I am about to give you ; this I did yesterday, and, although the reduction is not so great as I had previously supposed, yet the particulars may not be irrelevant.”

He then proceeds to give a long history, almost amounting to the birth, parentage, and education of a man five feet high—twenty-seven years of age—weighing twenty-three stone ; and enters into a detail of his plans for reducing his bulk, the short abstract of which is, that

June 17, 1820,	the weight of this person was, as		
stated,	.	.	23st. 2lbs.
July 27	.	.	21 10
Sept. 10	.	.	20 7
Oct. 10	.	.	19 3
Nov. 10	.	.	18 11
Dec. 10	.	.	18 4
— 25	.	.	18 1

being a reduction of five stone one pound.

“ I have always found it very difficult to

get corpulent persons to give up those habits which lead to obesity ; they are, for the most part, great lovers of the table, and not easily induced to forego the pleasures of it. On returning home, after some years' absence, I passed a man in the street without knowing him, although I had previously been well acquainted with him. He had, from being as corpulent a person as I ever saw, become altogether as thin. Upon inquiring what disease had wrought this effect on him, I found he had been in perfect health, and continued so; but sheer poverty had laid its hand on him, and by depriving him of his usual good cheer, produced the change."

Observations.—There are many instances on record, of persons being cured of obesity by accidental circumstances, very disagreeable in themselves, but very salutary in their results ; and many very extraordinary cases are related in ancient authors bordering on the miraculous, but given with a confidence that should awaken our attention, if they do not entirely overcome our incredulity. Of these, in Schenk's collection, is an account of Francis Pechi, a great sufferer from the accumulated mischiefs

of good living, who was accidentally imprisoned. In the year 1556, after a lapse of twenty years, he was found alive and well, by the French, who took the citadel in which he was confined; he was, moreover, cured of all complaints, and walked through the city, his sword by his side, without the aid of a stick. Dr. Barwick notices a similar case of his brother, who was confined many years in the Tower during the usurpation.

Tippoo Saib kept some English prisoners on bread and water. Notwithstanding this hard fare, on their release and return to Calcutta, they found themselves in better health, and some of them cured of liver complaints, while others of their more *fortunate* friends had died in the interim.

The anecdote told by Colley Cibber, of Romeo's Apothecary; and the case of the Brewer's Servant, mentioned in "Remarks on Corpulency*," are of the same kind; and many cases similar to these must have occurred in the experience of every man who has lived long and much in the world.

* Pages 41 and 109.

CASE IV.

A Gentleman called upon me one day, who, as soon as he entered, I felt myself involuntarily exclaiming, “Voilà, mon oncle ! un petit homme haut de trois pieds et demi, extraordinairement gros, avec une tête enfoncée entre les deux épaules,”—but more, he was the very epitome of good nature and good living—the breathing personification of enjoyment—the actual type of merry-making. As soon as he could, he informed me that he was a Norfolk gentleman (dumpling, he might have said), passing through London to Devonshire for milder air, being troubled with “*shortness of breath*.” He did not call to consult me about that, but just to know if I had any *specific* to cure corpulency. Seeing that he was truly, according to Shakspeare’s notion, “fat and scant of breath,” I suggested Radcliffe’s remedy ; but he spurned such advice, he wanted the *specific*. I assured him I knew of none, when, with a look of good-humoured incredulity, he put into my hand the following notice :—

“ *To the Corpulent.*—Nothing, it is universally admitted, can be more ungraceful and unsightly than a fat habit of body. It causes a man to look like a beef-eater, and gives to the whole person an air of extreme vulgarity. For this reason, a medical gentleman of the first eminence has, for a series of years, directed his study to the discovery of a remedy against this disagreeable complaint. Nor have his long and laborious researches been without success, insomuch that he has now the satisfaction of announcing to the public that he has discovered a certain specific, which will not only reduce the most corpulent person to a graceful and slender habit, but effectually prevent all those who take it from ever becoming fat, were they even to belong to the Court of Aldermen, or to be constant attendants at vestry dinners. The proprietor pledges himself to the nobility and gentry, that his said remedy is so perfectly safe and harmless, that even a child at the breast may take it. To be had in bottles, only ten shillings each, duty included, at a *Fancy shop, Bare-bone Passage.*”

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Comments on Corpulency.

Simplicity of character has been considered as a most amiable and enviable quality, and this man was the most striking personification of it I ever met with. We may presume it was the characteristic of his family, for he was seeking the *specific* by the advice of his *maiden sister*, who was “*counted rather clever !*”

The positive conviction that the whole was a joke seemed to disappoint him, for he expected that, with the specific in his pocket, he was to live *ad libitum*; and his worthy sister no doubt intended to do wondrous works with such a powerful addition to her store of recipes.

CASE V.

Extract of a Letter from a facetious medical Friend.

“ Our fat landlord’s occupation is no more ! he died suffocated by his own fat ; and his disconsolate widow, who has been blessed with *four* doating husbands, is now in fine feather for another.”

“ Poor fellow ! he wished to live, but he said ‘ the devil was in his stomach ;’ and truly a devil of a stomach he had. Preaching abstinence was in vain. His wife, worthy woman, knew his stomach as well as himself ; she was constantly crying, ‘ he will die if he be not well nourished,’ while he emphatically echoed, ‘ he knew his own inside.’ So they cooked the matter between them, and a fine hash they made of it. He had no objection to physic ; to do him justice, his stomach was more exigent than nice, and when absolute necessity required the restraints of *maigre*, his kind wife always took care to slip a lump of butter and a glass of brandy into his gruel. But enough of the Red Lion.

“ We have some jolly dames in this neighbourhood, tolerable specimens of what you call ‘ obesity,’ but none of the dimensions of Park’s African princesses, where no beauty aspires to royal observation without having first weighed down a moderate-sized camel.

“ With respect to fat gentlemen, I beg to introduce myself—my height is five feet three inches, and I weigh seventeen stone, and I am ready to sit for my picture, in any atti-

tude you think most favourable for giving full effect to my ‘omental rotundity.’

“ But to be serious—have we not corpulency with little fat, and fat deposited several inches on the abdominal muscles, especially without distended viscera?

“ Obesity, I conceive, may be a healthy or a diseased deposit; healthy, when a superabundant nutrition is taken up by the absorbent vessels, and when all the secretions of the body are perfectly performed; diseased, when a lethargic state of brain induces this accumulation, to the hinderance of muscular action, giving a bloated and plethoric character to the whole outline of the body.

“ It is a healthy deposit in an animal feeding on grass, and rambling at large; it becomes a diseased one in animals tied to a rack, and fed upon oil-cake; and it appears to me, too, that this disposition to sleep upon a distended stomach is the great promoter of the evil, as I am credibly informed by a gentleman in this neighbourhood, who formerly fattened bullocks, that all those animals who became restless, and would not sleep, were

invariably turned loose again, as unprofitable subjects."

Observations.—" Mine host of the Red Lion" is not the only instance that has come within my knowledge, of worthy persons *kindly coddled out of the world.*"—" But is she nourished?" said a Lady Bountiful to me, in a case of peritoneal inflammation? I was once called up in the night, after a case of Lithotomy, by an experienced nurse emphatically exclaiming, " Bless you, Sir, come and settle the cookery! We are stuffing in beef-tea, and we shall be at beef-steaks before morning!" The restless bullocks puts me in mind of an Irish advertisement: " Good grass for horses, on the following terms: Long tails at three shillings and six-pence, and short tails at half-a-crown per week." Upon inquiry, the following reason was given for the difference in price, *viz.* that long tailed horses, by whisking the flies off, could always feed undisturbed; but short tailed horses were so tormented, as not to be able to feed in the day-time.

CASE VI.

“ At 30 years of age he weighed twenty-three stone, ate and drank with great freedom, and in great abundance, and was withal so lethargic, that he frequently fell asleep in the act of eating, and this in company.

“ He felt much inconvenience and alarm from these symptoms, and went to Edinburgh to consult Dr. Gregory ; in pursuance of his advice, he took a great deal of exercise, lived sparingly, and slept little. The quantum of the former depended on the season, and on the power of the patient to bear fatigue. The prescribed diet consisted principally of *brown bread* and tea, the former having a considerable quantity of bran ; but as it was necessary to *fill* the stomach, the patient ate a great quantity of apples ; and to enable him to take the necessary exercise, he found a pint of port or sherry a day indispensable. He retired to rest about eleven, and rose at four or five in the morning. The only medicine he took was three brisk cathartics a week. The precise

time he continued under this rigorous system I have not ascertained; he is now thirty-eight, and has been well some years. He reduced himself to fifteen stone only, being a very large and bony man, and I understand that he now eats and drinks without any restraint, so much so, that it is thought he has of late got rather fatter, and may, without care, be again in the state from which he recovered."

Observations.—The memoranda of this case were given to me by a sensible friend, who, though an adept in the *savoir vivre*, tempers good living with good discretion.

Under the judicious direction of Dr. Gregory, the patient was reduced *eight stone*, which is the most important fact in the narrative. The next is the importance attached to *brown* bread, or bread having a certain quantity of bran in it—a very grand secret in the history of *panification*, from its practical application to medical purposes, the whole of the alimentary secretions being altered by a change in the quality of the bread, as I know

by my own experience, by occasionally dining with some of the advocates of this *bruno-nian* system.

That I may be understood on this point, I beg to state that I am no admirer of

—————“ the household bread,
Curative of the aching head,
And constipation’s other ills,
For which folks swallow salts and pills;”

but I am, and always have been, an inquirer for the “ stale loaf,” for which I could offer many excellent reasons, were they not all anticipated by my learned and scientific friend, Dr. Paris, in his Chapter on “ Farinaceous Aliments.”

To observe that just medium, with respect to quantity, which is most conducive to a healthy state of stomach, demands not only attention, but resolution. The *how much* must be determined by the individual; those who can abstain at the first sensation of satiety, and can resist the demands of appetite, have made great progress in the art of curing most chronic indispositions, of regaining health, and preserving it.

Unerring Nature learn to follow close,
For *quantum sufficit* is her just dose.

This, though a trite and familiar doctrine, cannot be too strongly or too often inculcated; in fact, *non satiari cibis* is a rule of health as old as Hippocrates.

CASE VII.

From a Country Physician.

“ Nothing proves you more to be a man of business than your hand-writing, which is as illegible as Sir Walter’s. In this respect, I am myself on a par with the most learned doctors of our acquaintance, as you will readily admit before you have read three lines of this journal. . . . Our fat patient fasts and grumbles, but keeps up his weight in a wonderful degree. ‘C’est un personnage illustre dans son genre, et qui a porté le talent de se bien nourrir, jusqu’où il pouvait aller; il ne semble né que pour la digestion.’ I believe he would fatten on saw-dust. There is one very important improvement in his symptoms. He can breathe better, and can

lie in a recumbent posture, which he has not been able to do for many years. This alone keeps him to his ‘régime forte et dure,’—for it is a curious circumstance, that after three months’ starvation, as he calls it, he is not above ten pounds actually lighter, though so wonderfully lighter in his feelings. Every time I see him I have to contend with some cogent reason, which he urges with considerable humour, to prove that his constitution will suffer, all of which I have hitherto combated successfully. Yesterday, however, he took a new position :—he had doubts on a moral ground.—‘It is a bad example,’ said he, ‘for

“ If all the world

Should, in a fit of temperance, feed on pulse,
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,
Th’ All-giver would be unthanked.’ ”

Observations.—The person alluded to in this letter, as might be supposed, died suddenly. He was a very sensible man, a perfect gentleman, a fine scholar, with a playful wit, that made him a most agreeable companion : and his temper was cast in that happy mould

which "looks at every thing on its most favourable side." The Doctor thought "he would fatten on saw-dust," and truly, like Father Paul, "the little he took prospered with him." He grew fat in spite of starvation, which he enforced with some pertinacity, though he was constantly furnishing ingenious apologies for following the natural bent of his inclinations*. The most distressing symptom he had to contend with was difficulty of breathing. He constantly complained of oppression about the præcordium, and he had all the symptoms of hydrothorax. But having seen many cases with similar symptoms,

* A humorous author has given an account of a person of this kind, a worthy woman, who kept adding growth unto growth, "giving a sum of more to that which had too much," till the result was worthy of a Smithfield premium. This was not the triumph of any systematic diet for the production of fat; on the contrary, she lived abstemiously, diluting her food with pickles, acids, and keeping frequent fasts in order to reduce her compass; but they were of no avail. Nature had planned an original tendency in her organization that was not to be overcome; she would have fatted on sour krout.

where fat impeded the functions of life, I was always impressed with the notion, that it was fat and not water that oppressed the heart, and so it proved to be on examination.

I had an opportunity of examining the body, which presented one of the most extraordinary internal accumulations of adeps I ever witnessed. The heart itself was a mass of fat. The omentum was a thick fat apron. The whole of the intestinal canal was imbedded in fat, as if melted tallow had been poured into the cavity of the abdomen; and the diaphragm and the parietes of the abdomen must have been strained to their very utmost extent, to have sustained the extreme and constant pressure of such a weighty mass.

So great was the mechanical obstruction to the functions of an organ essential to life, that the wonder is, not that he should die, but that he should live. In very many cases of sudden death, charged to the account of apoplexy, I am perfectly convinced that the previous symptoms would be found, on inquiry, to be referable to the heart and circu-

lation, and the head has often been examined for causes which ought to have been sought for in the region of the hypogastrium. *A sudden palpitation excited in the heart of a fat man has often proved as fatal as a bullet through the thorax*; and that it was the cause of death here is most probable. There was no organ or viscus diseased, nor can even the immense deposition of fat in this case, as far as simple animal organization is concerned, be considered as disease.

There are many fatal diseases connected with the accumulation of fat about the heart, particularly *angina pectoris*.

In Dr. Blackall's cases of *angina pectoris*, we find, Case 3, "the heart large and fat;" Case 4, "a great deal of fat in the anterior mediastinum." The same occurs in Dr. Wall's case and Dr. Fothergill's in the Medical Observations and Inquiries. Also in a case by Mr. Paytherus.

Dr. Black, in a case of *angina pectoris*, in vol. vii. of Medico-Chirurgical Transactions, says, "the first striking appearance was the degree to which the cellular membrane was

loaded with fat." The same in the case of Mr. M'Cormick, *ibid.*; and the Doctor notices, p. 82, the relation to obesity.

CASE VIII.

Hypochondriasis.

It does not often occur to the surgeon to see—

“ Moping Hypochondria, mother of Spleen ;”
and although I do not mean to connect “ *la maladie sans maladie*,” with obesity, yet it so happens that the cases I have seen have been all corpulent persons, with the exception of one little gentleman, who thought he was growing too large for his skin. The celebrated Doctor Watts may be mentioned as another, who, though a puny man, took a fancy, in his latter days, that he could not pass through a door ; an error which was only corrected by his passing through the portal of Death.

Every practitioner must have seen or heard of persons fancying themselves made of *glass* ; I once had occasion to visit an *earthen-ware*

patient. A fat gentleman sent for me, having met with an accident, not very serious in its nature, but very painful. Lotions, bandages, and plaisters were applied, *secundem artem*, and the case went on most prosperously :—but in proportion as he got on surgically he fell off physically, and, instead of being pleased and thankful, he became querelous and morose. Remembering Bouvart's Scale for Convalescence, and, that "Good morning, Mr. Bouvart," was the announcement of a perfect cure, I guessed this was my patient's case. I did not, however, perfectly comprehend all its bearings, till his valet, a very shrewd fellow, said, "Bless you, Sir! you must not mind him,—he's only coming back to his old ways."—"Old ways?"—"Yes, Sir, he's going to be a—tea pot!"—"A what?"—"A tea pot!!"

This may seem very ludicrous, but it is very serious, and must be treated seriously, when it occurs. These hypochondriacs are like Molière's sick man, they always fly into a passion when credit is not given to their complaints—you may easier call them scoundrel, than tell them they look well; and, as

Montaigne very justly remarks, they will allow themselves to be blistered and bled, “for evils which they feel only in their conversation.”

Many ingenious contrivances have been resorted to in these cases. We read in ancient history, that Philotimus cured a patrician, who fancied he had lost his head, by putting a heavy iron helmet on his skull, the weight of which successfully convinced him, that he had still a head upon his shoulders. But all contrivances fall short of a German doctor, who conceived the bold idea of inoculating a patient with *psora* — vulgarly called the Scotch-fiddle! The *amusement* this disease produced, caused a *diversion* of the other.

CASE IX.

A worthy, fat, hypochondriacal bachelor sent for me one day, to tell me that he was dying; that he had left directions I should open him for the benefit of mankind; and that, if it was important, it might be done immediately after the breath was out of his body, only taking care to pierce him through

the heart, to prevent resuscitation. This *scena* was repeated at least once a year for twenty years; at last he died, with as good viscera as any gentleman of seventy-nine years of age was ever blessed with. He was one of those who studied the art of self-tormenting, a comfort which, unfortunately for those about him, he dispensed with a liberal hand. *Pity* seemed the pabulum of his life; and to exact commiseration for imaginary ills,

“ Which real ills, and they alone could cure,”

was the great object of his existence. *He ate well, drank well, slept well*:—but what of that? He had “ weak stomach and giddy head; flying gout, wind in his veins, and water in his skin, with constant crackings and burnings.” His business seemed, seeking for new causes to make himself miserable. “ Your pulse is very good, Sir.”—“ Ay, so you say; every body says so! that pulse will be the death of me; my pulse deceives every body, and my complaints are neglected because I happen to have a good pulse!”—“ Your tongue, Sir, is clean.”—“ Ay, there it

is again; you should have seen it in the morning—as white as a sheet of paper.”

“ The valetudinary, thus,

“ Rings o’er and o’er his hourly fuss.”

Observations.—It is truly said that “ *qui medicè vivit, misere vivit.*” There cannot be a more pitiable person than one who exists per force of physic, flannel, and barley water—drop their wine, weigh their meat, feel their pulse, examine their tongue, make all their movements and meals by the regulation of the stop-watch, and who measure out their life and actions by the scale of scruples and drachms. I know persons who, strange to say, are sufferers from the rigid regularity with which they eat, drink, and sleep. This is a city complaint, originally introduced by some of the Hamborough Van-Dams of the last century, whose movements resembled those of the figures of their own Dutch clocks, equally regular, and about as lively. These demi-Dutch invalids, who make the periods of eating, drinking, and sleeping the chief *business* of life, may be considered as *eating valetudinarians*, who never fail to put the

very important question—"What am I to eat?" This constant query is very seldom satisfactorily answered. We remember Sir Richard Jebb's sad failure about muffins and boiled turnips. Dr. Reynolds, who was in every respect an able practitioner, was the most ready with his answer to this question. He invariably recollected whether it was muffins, or crumpets, or *boiled* turnips, or *baked* pears, that he had recommended, and he never allowed one or the other of these *materia alimentaria* to be changed *without his positive order*—and he was right, as will appear by the following anecdote:—

An eminent court-physician visiting a noble lady, the following scene took place: "Pray, doctor, do you think I might now venture on a slice of chicken, and a single glass of madeira, as I feel very faint and low?"—"Most certainly; I perceive nothing in the state of your ladyship's pulse, or the appearance of your tongue, to forbid so reasonable an indulgence." Her ladyship instantly rang the bell, and with more than usual peremptoriness of manner, desired the servant to order the doctor's car-

riage to the door immediately ; then addressed him as follows : “ Sir, there is your fee, and, depend upon it, it is the last you shall receive from me. I asked you a question, a serious question, Sir, to me, considering the very abstemious regimen to which I have so long submitted under your direction ; and I think it full time to withdraw my confidence from a physician who delivers a professional opinion without any foundation : for you must be perfectly aware, Sir, that you neither felt my pulse nor examined my tongue.”

Perhaps the most pertinent answer, after all, was that given by the celebrated Dr. Mandeville to the Earl of Macclesfield. “ Doctor, is this wholesome ? ” — “ Does your lordship like it ? ” — “ Yes. ” — “ Does it agree with your lordship ? ” — “ Yes. ” — “ Why then, it is wholesome. ” This was also the opinion of Lord Bacon, a tolerably good authority in matters of food, as well as philosophy. “ There is a wisdom in this,” says he, “ beyond the rules of physic ; a man’s own observation what he finds good of, and what he finds hurt of, is the best physic to preserve health. ” So

true is it, that a man, according to the trite maxim, is a fool or a physician at forty.

CASE X.

Case of ———.

“ In the year of the coronation, 1821, I went to the north of Scotland, under considerable mental anxiety and agitation. I had no sooner completed my journey than I was attacked by fever, and confined to bed, from August to November. As the biliary secretions were greatly deranged, mercury, under very judicious advice, was administered, till my mouth became affected, and, I may add, my mind also. It brought me to a state such as fits a person for suicide, nervous in the highest degree; with a full conviction that my friendly Doctors wanted to smother me; a circumstance I communicated, confidentially, to those, whom even my diseased feelings did not make me doubt.

“ Amongst other phantasies, I confidently believed that all below the *lumbar vertebræ*



W. Wado
Jr.

Comments on Corpulency.

did not belong to me, that the bed on which I lay was a warehouse,—in short

“ I fancied in my fluttering mood
All the diseases which the 'spitals know,
For sometimes I would laugh, and sometimes cry,
Then sudden waxed wrath, and all I knew not why.”

CASE XI.

The fair sex are not exempted from the inconveniences of obesity, and the annexed sketch is of a woman, whose petticoat would have fitted Falstaff, as well as that of the fat woman of Brentford. This monstrous fair one was really a *great object* of interest, being nearly starved by the brutality of her son-in-law. She had been formerly the wife of a man who kept a small public house, and in that capacity, without any equivoke, might have been truly called a *Wapping landlady*. When I first saw her she was an immense mass of disease, with all the restlessness of thought, accompanying the domestic miseries of poverty.

“ Pale, bloated, cold, she seemed to hate mankind.”

And, as far as her very slender means would allow, she was chasing away sad thoughts by the aid of the brandy bottle. Alas! poor woman, real human miseries oppressed her; the Θειον τι of Hippocrates could not be found in her symptoms—there was nothing “divine in her disorder.” She was not *rich* enough to have the vapours!

CASE XII.

The memoranda of the case before us are interesting, as illustrative of a curious surgical complaint—not in the least connected with the present subject—but the patient had a little *twist*, of which I find the following note:—

This gentleman was not only amiable but very rich and very polite—excepting when “his skin pinched him,” a term he always used when oppressed by uncomfortable sensations. One day “when he was sure he would burst,” with a long face and gloomy looks, he thus addressed me:—“Lord, Sir! I’m very queer—very poorly—always poorly—I’ve no stomach,” said he, looking me full

in the face.—“Now I want to know about diet—what should I eat?”—“Nothing.”—“What should I drink?”—“Nothing.”—“Hot or cold?”—This “*reductio ad absurdum*,” took my breath away;—he made no alteration in his tone, but went on with his queries, most of which he kindly answered himself. “*Otio abundas, Antipho*,” exclaimed Fallopius, on a similar occasion, which proves that Hypochondriasis was not unknown in the days of Terence.

Where all is wrong there can be no alleviation from medicine—real disease can alone cure imaginary disease—and it sometimes happens that those who are *only whimsical*, become, by a just retribution, really what they fancied themselves.

An intelligent French author (Monsieur Maillet) mentions that, a thousand years before the Christian Æra, the Egyptians had two temples, dedicated to Saturn, which they wisely placed at the *extremities of the kingdom*, for the benefit of hypochondriacal patients. These temples were the Bath and Brighton of the East—and, as at these places, the iron restraints of diet, and the doctor, were made palatable by recreative amusements, and the diseased mind diverted from itself by agreeable images, and melodious sounds. In those days they were aware of the advantage of mixing music with medicine. What would be the effect of a bottle of spa-water drank in secrecy and silence? They were aware also of the great importance of exercise, and sent their patients to the distant temples: “ *Non propter salubritatem aquarum, sed propter longinquam peregrinationem.*”

There is something very comfortable in

the notion of a specific—it saves a great deal of trouble, and enables the parties to live as they like—so thought the gentleman who ate the “miller’s pudding,” as a “specific,” every day after dinner.

The majority of those who seek for specific remedies, inquire for pills—this is very natural, it is a *multum in parvo* dose, of great antiquity. “*Pharmaca illa in globulos conformata vulgo pilulæ nominamus*”—says the profound Pliny;—but he does not give any formula that we can apply to present purposes. Avicenna, who was a more practical person, having commenced the business of visiting patients at sixteen years of age, on the strength of some prescriptions, surreptitiously obtained from his old master; gives a receipt for some pills as a preservative against hunger in the time of famine, which, being translated, is as follows:—

“Take of sweet almonds one pound; the like quantity of melted beef-suet; of oil of violets two ounces; a sufficient quantity of mucilage; and of the roots of marsh-mallows, one ounce: let altogether be brayed in a mortar, and

made into bolusses, about the bigness of a common nut."

It is of the utmost consequence in the cure of Obesity, to take off the pinguify propensities of the appetite. Of this Avicenna seems to have been aware, and he recommends those who cannot swallow the pills, to take the remedy in a fluid state, *i. e.* "*one pound* of oil of violets, mixed with melted beef-suet. A person taking this, may fast for ten days together without the least hunger!!"

Doubtless this would answer the purpose full as well as the French alimentary powder, Lord Byron's tobacco, or the German Girdle Schmachtrimen—which means the Girdle of Emptiness.

Etmuller recommends pills, washed down with the Elixir Proprietatis, "a very drying medicine, known to the ancients," (*much better than to the moderns*).

Monsieur Andry, a great advocate for pills made of ashes of cray-fish, sea sponge, and the pith of sweet-briar, alarmed all experimental invalids, by a cautionary admonition,

“ that they were of so extenuating a nature, that unless administered with great judgment they would cause too great a meagreness.” In the administration of this *potent* remedy we must proceed cautiously, bearing in mind a saying of honest old Boerhaave’s—“ *Nullum ego cognosco remedium nisi quod tempestivo usu fiat tale.*”

During a long period, specifics for all human ailments were sought in the vegetable kingdom, and botanical chemistry was so closely allied to physic, that no professor of the former could be eminent without an extensive knowledge of the latter. This was particularly the case in the reign of Wigs and Canes. Let us take a specimen of those botanical practitioners, “ *verbatim et literatim*” from a consultation in King Charles’s days.

“ R tamarind. cassiæ recent. extract. an. ʒj. fol. senæ ʒvj. Rhei ʒij. sem. coriand. præparat. ʒj. macis ʒss. infund. & ebulliant in s. q. aq. pomor. addendo vini albi & succi pomor. an. ʒij. Colaturæ ℥j. adde syr. violar. & mannæ an. ʒjss. clarificetur ovi albumine, & fiat Apozema pro tribus dosibus alternis auroris

sumendis. R sarsaparillæ ℥vj. Chinæ ℥iv. ligni lentisc. ℥iij. sassafras. ℥ij. ligni guaiaci, eboris, corn. cervi, an. ℥jss. passul. enucleat. ℔j. cort. Winteranæ, flaved. aurantiorum, citr. nuc. moschat. an. ℥ij. incidend. incidantur & contund. contundantur, & adde fol. cochlear. marin. ad biduum siccant. Mvj. salviæ Mij. anthos Mj. milleped. ℔ss. furfuris frumentac. Mj. frust. chalybis recent num. iij. fiat Sacculus suspend. in con. vj. cerevisiæ dimid. part lupulat. & si pro potu ordinario. R ligni sassafras ℔ss. infund. in aquæ font. ℔xvj. dein adde eboris & corn. cervi an. ℥vj. fol. agrimon. cochlear. marin. beccabung, nasturtii aquatici, an. Mvj. cochlear. hortens. berber. an. Miiij. passular. enucleat. ℔ij. cort. Winteran. cinnamomi, an ℥ij. vini albi ℔iiij. lactis recentis ℔vj. distillentur organis commun. capiat. aq. distillatæ ℥vi. extra pastum ter in die, dulcoretur syrupo nostro balsamic."

Modern physicians were pleased to despise this as old wives' gossip, and, running into an opposite extreme, so simplified the practice, that four medical men have been known to sit in consultation on a grain of blue-pill; and debate into how many parts it should be divided. A prescription of such simple practice, not four years old, is now in the archives of Apothecaries Hall.

This, however, shrinks into nothing, when

compared with the Homœopathic system, now in vogue in Germany. “The *thousandth part of a grain* of arsenic is the largest dose that should be given, and the *hundred-thousandth* part of a grain is enough in ordinary cases !” A drop of the spirituous tincture of sarsaparilla is said to be a strong dose—and the *seven-millionth part of a grain* of cucumis colocynthis acts sometimes too powerfully !!

Truly has it been said—some Doctors let the patient die, for fear they should kill him ; while others kill the patient, for fear he should die.

In the ancient “Theriaca Andromachi” there were seventy-two ingredients. According to the Homœopathic system, the Elder, a most innocent flower, produces 116 symptoms ! Supposing, therefore, each article of the Theriaca to be equally productive—the Theriacal symptoms would have amounted to no less a number than 8,352 !!!

This, perhaps, may afford a clue to the multiplicity of ingredients used in old prescriptions, in which action, and counteraction, were combined in such perplexing variety,

that no man could tell what the effect of his mixture would be; he could only hope a trump would be found in the pack.

That “preparations which have the power to act beneficially, in the same ratio necessarily do harm if unskilfully exhibited”—is an observation of the learned Mead. A stronger proof of it cannot be given, than in the case of General Vitellis, whose skin hung about him, from the injudicious administration of that common and efficacious remedy—vinegar.

Cælius Aurelianus was a great advocate for a sudorific system—of hot sand-baths, stoves, and stews. This was equally objectionable, from the disagreeable effects of *over*-stewing, occasionally producing similar results to those of General Vitellis, or the “Fat single Gentleman,” who lived six months, unconsciously, over a baker’s oven. The Newmarket plan is more safe and more certain, according to the opinion of the most skilful trainers. A gentleman who was recommended to try a Newmarket doctor, objected to the journey—having, as he said, all the requisites at home, *viz.*—“a small house, with a large fire, a

son, who kept him in a perpetual fever, and a very fat wife !”

All agree in the advantages of temperance. Sir William Temple says “ a man has but these four things to choose out of—to *exercise* much, to be very *temperate*, to take *physic*, or be *sick*.”

There have been many ingenious devices for keeping people within bounds at the festive board—moderation or temperance, according to the confession of Dr. Johnson, “ being no easy virtue.”

It was the custom with some of the emperors at Constantinople, at their coronation, while they were seated on their throne receiving the homage of the people, for a mason to come with patterns of choice marble, and beg to know which the august person would please to have his tomb made of!

The Egyptians carried a skeleton at their feasts, lest their guests, in the midst of feasting and merriment, should forget the frail tenure of life, and its enjoyments.

In imitation of these ancient authorities,

a modern Gastronome had his gouty shoe presented to him as a memento, between the first and second courses.

The importance of exercise is enforced both by ancient and modern writers. Dancing has been recommended. Mead had a dancing-master in his old age*, and the illustrious Scaliger performed the *Saltatio Pyrrhica*, before the emperor Maximilian—" *non sine stupore totius Germaniæ !*"

On horseback one can take most exercise in the shortest time. Next to this, riding on a long stick, has been highly commended—" *Equitare in arundine longâ*," as the learned Scriblerus hath it—which has occasionally done wonders, on the same principle that the *basilisk*, administered in a ball, was so efficacious to the voluptuary Ogul. Nor is there a better remedy now than this *basilisk bolus*, and other ingenious applications of the " *Medicina Gymnastica*."

* The Doctor, perhaps, had studied a book in the College library—" *Instructions de bien Dancer*," 4to. Paris, 1488.

All these subjects, however, have been discussed at large in the "Cursory Remarks on Corpulence,"—but for those who have leisure, and inclination to pursue the subject, I have added the following list of

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LEANNESS.

91



W. Wade
Scot

Lineaments of Scanness.

LEANNESS.

LINEAMENTS OF LEANNESS.

IT may naturally be supposed, from the cases, and comments on Corpulency, that the “*fat* and *fair*,” have not been the only persons who have consulted me ; the man who knows how to reduce “the *fat*,” ought to know how to “fatten the lean ;” and, accordingly, I have occasionally been visited by “*quelques Anatomies Vivantes*,” and although Mons. —*,

* This extraordinary production of nature, pronounced by the most eminent of the faculty, in France and England, to be a “*great phenomenon*,” was brought, as we are told, to this country, at a considerable expense, to contribute to the advancement of science ! The expense of keeping a skeleton we cannot calculate from any practical experience in this country ; but we may presume it was not much ; “*a recreative excursion*,” for a party of such persons, would, it may be presumed,

the real living skeleton, never did me the honour of a visit, I have seen full as great curiosities as the said Monsieur, within the circle of my own acquaintance; and, in the persons of two of my most intimate friends, witnessed the most extraordinary instances of emaciation that the human frame could possibly exhibit. One of these was a gentleman about forty years of age; the other was one of the most lovely, and beautiful, of her sex, who, when she died, at the early age of thirty, presented the resemblance of an ivory skeleton, covered with thin parchment.

These cases were similar in appearance and progress; and each of them the effect of great organic disease, in the mesenteric glands, and abdominal viscera. The first of these cases was Major P——, who, after much military service, and harder duty, as regarded his health, in the service of conviviality, and good living, became a barrack-master in

not cost so large a sum as the convivial committee of City lands.—Quere? which was advanced most by the skeleton's visit, the Englishman's philosophy, or the Frenchman's fortune?

Sussex. I had not seen him for a year or two, when one morning he called me up, having suddenly left his quarters, "to seek my friendly advice, on matters of the utmost importance!" For some moments I could not recognise my friend—I knew him not; how should I? an insane skeleton addressed me! It spoke of circumstances I knew, but in a voice I knew not. Never, in my professional life, was I more distressingly affected. I met the momentary difficulty of contending feelings as well as I could, and, as soon as circumstances permitted, deposited a living skeleton in the charge of his family. He lived a few weeks, eating voraciously; and swallowed, or rather bolted, some large lumps of meat within a few hours of his death.

There are, however, cases of the absorption of fat, the causes of which it is impossible to ascertain.

A curious case is related by Halle, in the "*Mémoires de l'Institut National*," of a young woman who gradually became emaciated, without any diminution of appetite, and with-

out any specific complaint. At the age of twenty-one, the emaciation commenced; and from that time went on progressively. She died at five-and-twenty, having been confined to her bed only fifteen hours, and in these were included the usual hours of rest. The only peculiarities discovered, on dissection, were the almost total want of fat, and the obliteration, in a great measure, of the lymphatic system. The lacteals were invisible; all the glands were remarkably small; the inguinal glands, in particular, were quite shrunk, and the vessels leading to them were almost impervious.

Halle, therefore concludes, that this case affords an example of atrophy, independent of any organic affection, except what resulted from the successive obliteration of the lymphatic system.

Two remarkable instances are mentioned by Lorry—one of which will sufficiently illustrate this remark.

A person advanced in years, and affected with melancholy, became, without any evident cause, in such a dry state, as to be unable to

move without producing a horrid, crackling noise in all his bones, even the spine, to such a degree, that (being a priest) he was obliged to give up saying mass, as the noise was so great as to astonish the vulgar, and make children laugh.

Sudden emaciation and absorption of fat, however, the effect of diseased organic structure or acute disease, does not properly belong to, or characterise that opposite state, or antithesis to *corpulence*, known by the term *leanness*, which is always attended by extreme tension, and dryness of the cellular membrane, very frequently by weakness in the digestive powers, but not constantly, as we sometimes find thin and lean persons, eat more in quantity than others.

It is not eating alone, however, but digestion, that gives strength and nourishment; yet digestion may be perfect, and assimilation of chyle into blood imperfect; for, that the quantity of nourishment does not depend on the quantity of food, is evinced, by the most voracious eaters being found among the leanest of their kind.

The act of eating gives rise to three subsequent processes, digestion, chymefaction, and chylofaction. The production of fat, seems to depend most on this latter process; and whether, as Father Paul says, "the little we take prospers with us," or whether we fall off though fed on turtle, seems to depend on the facility of chylofaction; a process carried on out of the stomach, in the small intestines, a lower portion of the alimentary canal, to which the attention of modern physicians, and physiologists, has been particularly directed; and to which we may attribute the *duodenal* diseases, and discrepancies now so fashionable.

There are many of the phenomena of digestion perfectly intelligible; there are others that are not so; and from the peculiar effects of certain alimentary substances, we are led to conclude, that there is a shorter road for some of the excretions, than by the lacteals and general circulation. And although we can very readily explain and account for, various circumstances connected with digestion, and chylofaction, there are many questions arising out of them, that an ingenious casuist may

suggest, to which we can give no other answer than the doctors did to Voltaire, when he proposed on this subject the following question :—

“ Par quel secret mystère,

Ce pain, cet aliment dans mon corps digéré,

Se transforme dans un lait doucement préparé ?

Comment, toujours filtré dans ces routes certaines

En longs ruisseaux de pourpre il court enfler mes
veines ? ”

“ Demandez-ce à ce Dieu qui nous donne la vie—”

was the oracular answer.

“ But what is the cause of my leanness ? ” said a thin gentleman, who would have given half his fortune for half my fat ; “ what is the cause of my leanness ? ” — “ Demandez-ce à ce Dieu ! ” — “ Pho ! demand a fiddlestick’s end ! — I want *you* to tell me, Sir, — *you*, Sir ; — what is the cause of my leanness ? ” — “ Well — soyez tranquille — be quiet a minute : there is a predisposition in your constitution to make you lean, and a disposition in your constitution to keep you so.” This explanation, about as satisfactory as Dr.

Thomas Diaphoreus's explanation of the properties of opium—" *quia est in ea,*" &c. &c., did not soothe the irritability of my lean inquirer, who became, if possible, more shrunken and wizened as his heat increased. Seeing the nature and temper of my antagonist, I went to book with him in another way:—"Why, Sir, as to the causes of leanness, there may be many that an ingenious theorist might suggest;—I speak to you, Sir, as *to a sensible man.*"—The storm and heat began to subside; an oily word is like an emollient;—"I speak to you, Sir, as a sensible man, and I am aware that it is not sufficient to talk to *you* in general terms, of constitutional peculiarities, digestive organs, and alimentary functions; you must have a positive, specific cause; and, if possible, an explanation of that cause, as plain as the specification of a patent."—"Just so; that is what I want—you speak like *a sensible man*"—(the retort courteous)—"Every effect, Sir, must have a cause; and I want to know whether the cause may be in the stomach, or any particular part of my inside; and if so, whether, by particularly

directing our attention to that part, wherever it may be, we can in any way alter its nature ? ”

The expectations of patients are sometimes very exorbitant, generally in proportion to their ignorance ; sensible people give very little trouble. These demands it is not difficult to satisfy ; for a foolish answer, will always balance a foolish question. I do not recollect ever to have met the equal of this inquirer, except in a very pompous person, who kept a large circulating library, who, doubtless, thought “ keeping a library, he himself was learned,” and who, whenever my answer satisfied his great mind, always expressed his approbation by a condescending nod, with—“ Ay ! now, Sir, you give *us* a physical reason ! ”

But “ *revenons à nos moutons ;* ” finding my patient’s mind was bent on *localities*, I suggested the *intestinum cæcum* for his consideration—the newly-discovered organ of fat ! He had never heard of it ; this was what he *expected of me* (another retort courteous, for which I owed him one). “ This was news !

What was it? how was it?"—"Why, Sir, some are of opinion that the *cæcum* contains a certain ferment—some that it is destined to secrete an important fluid—others take it for a *second ventricle*, wherein the prepared aliments may be stored up, and so long retained, till a thicker and more nutritive juice may be drawn from them;—and how it is a depôt of fat, you will find in the ‘Philosophical Transactions.’”

He heard this very attentively, and having passed mutual compliments, and being *on very good terms with each other*, he favoured me with his unreserved opinion. “I see very clearly, Sir, the application of this discovery to my case: this is an age of discoveries!—the quantity of fat diffused over the body must be in proportion to the quantity in the depôt: I must have a small *cæcum*! Now the question is—can we enlarge it?—Perhaps I have no *cæcum*!” We quite agreed upon the impossibility of supplying this defect; but as “there is more in heaven and earth than we dream of in our philosophy,” my philosopher did not like to relinquish all speculation

upon the subject. I considered the case beyond surgery. I am not sure that I might have been allowed to look at the *caput coli*—though I have known an operation done on almost as frivolous grounds. But when I told him, that, according to the account of the celebrated Hoffman, dogs became rapidly fat when their spleen was removed, and that Mr. Hunter once removed it from a wounded man, who did very well, there seemed to arise a lurking longing, as much as to say, “I wish Mr. Hunter had my spleen.”

There is an asperity in the acute angles of some persons, that gives a most forbidding appearance—every feature is sharp, and every variety of movement quick. Shakspeare makes Cæsar desire that he may have fat people about his person. It would be hard, on this authority, to condemn all persons who have the misfortune to be born with small *cæcums* and large spleens, and are meagre from causes they cannot control, “as fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils.” Yet it is clear that Cæsar liked a curvilinear *embonpoint* appearance in his body-guard, and thought there

was most safety with a corpulent corps of household troops.

The lean are not less exposed to ridicule than the corpulent. A reverend doctor of divinity, of very ghostly appearance, was one day accosted by a vulgar fellow, who, after eyeing him from head to foot, at last said, "Well, doctor, I hope you have taken care of your *soul*!" "Why, my friend," said the amiable shadow, "why should you be so anxious that I should take care of my *soul*?"—"Because," replied the other, "I can tell you that your *body* is not worth caring for."

Jonas Hanway, who was remarkably thin, was met by a man much inebriated, who approached him in so irregular a direction, that it might have been concluded that he had business on both sides the way. Hanway stopped when he came up to him, to give him his choice; but the man stood as still as his intoxication would permit him, without attempting to pass on either side. After viewing each other a moment, "My friend," said Hanway, "you seem as if you had rather

drunk too much ;”—to which the man replied, with considerable *naïveté*, “ And you, my friend, seem as if you had *ate too little.*”

When the Duke de Choiseul, who was a remarkably meagre-looking man, came to London to negociate a peace, Charles Townsend being asked, whether the French Government had sent the preliminaries of a treaty, answered, he did not know, but they had sent the *outline of an Ambassador.*

I have stated, that good humour, and the power of looking on the favourable side of things, are among the concomitant causes of Corpulency ; and so they have been considered from the days of Solomon.—“ A merry heart doeth good like a medicine ; but a broken spirit drieth the bones.” Now the optics of some lean people are in so unlucky a perspective, as to throw a shade over every picture that is presented to them : to them the whole face of Nature is gloomy and ugly. It would be a blessed thing for such persons, if Dollond could alter their vision by the aid of spectacles. To fatten a man by impressions on the optic nerve would be a

new feat in the philosophy of physic and surgery*.

“ Laugh and grow fat ” is an old adage ; and Sterne tells us, that every time a man

* Dr. Franklin illustrates the different ways of seeing an object, by a story :—

“ An old philosophical gentleman had grown, from experience, very cautious in avoiding ill-natured people. He had, like other philosophers, a thermometer, to show him the heat of the weather, and a barometer, to mark when it was likely to prove good or bad ; but there being no instrument invented to discover, at first sight, this unpleasing disposition in a person, he, for this purpose, made use of his legs, one of which was remarkably handsome, the other, by some accident, crooked and deformed. If a stranger, at the first interview, regarded his ugly leg more than his handsome one, he doubted him. If he spoke of it, and took no notice of his handsome leg, that was sufficient to determine the philosopher to have no further acquaintance with him. Every body has not this two-legged instrument ; but every one, with a little attention, may observe signs of that carping, fault-finding disposition, and take the same resolution of avoiding the acquaintance of those infected by it. I therefore advise those querulous, discontented, unhappy people, if they wish to be respected and beloved by others, and happy in themselves, to *leave off looking at the ugly leg.*”

laughs, he adds something to his life. An eccentric philosopher, of the last century, used to say, that he liked not only to laugh himself, but to see laughter, and hear laughter. "Laughter, Sir, laughter is good for health ; it is a provocative to the appetite, and a friend to digestion. Dr. Sydenham, Sir, said the arrival of a merry-andrew in a town was more beneficial to the health of the inhabitants than twenty asses loaded with medicine." Mr. Pott used to say that he never saw the "Tailor riding to Brentford," without feeling better for a week afterwards.

From what has been said, it will appear that, next to my philosophical patient's notions of enlarging the *cæcum*, and lessening the spleen, the excitement of laughter ought to have a place in the "*Ars Pinguefaciendi*." Mr. George Jones, mentioned by Granger, seems to have had this object in view in his "Friendly Pills," which were to make patients of all complexions *laugh at the time of taking them*, and to cure all curable complaints. Let us hope, for the sake of his Majesty's "lean lieges," that George Jones's recipe may start

from some antiquarian pill-box, for the enlarging and beautifying that portion of the population. Let us also flatter ourselves, that although we do not now know our way to Mr. Payne's toy-shop, for his three-and-six-penny bottle of "Pinguefying Specific," such may be found amongst the arcana of modern chemistry*.

The French have a happy mode of introducing specifics ;—Monsieur Morison, l'Hy-

* When the Spectator was first published in the form of a newspaper, advertisements were attached to it, of which the following is a specimen :—

" An assured cure for *leanness*, which proceeds from a cause which few know, but easily removed by an unparalleled specific tincture, which fortifies the stomach, purifies the blood, takes off fretfulness in the mind, occasions rest, and easy sleep, and as certainly disposes and causes the body to thrive and become plump and fleshy, if no manifest distemper afflicts the patients, as water will quench fire, &c. &c.

" It is pleasant to taste, and is sold only at Mr. Payne's toy-shop ; price 3s. 6d. a bottle, with directions."

What effects it had upon those who tried it, does not appear, but the demand for it was so great that it cured the proprietor himself of leanness.

géiste, informs the thin gentlemen of Paris, that he has discovered *une Médecine Végétale*, which is administered in the shape of pills, and may be taken with perfect safety at all hours and seasons. Should the pills fail—then, there is the “CATAPEPSIENNE, *cette heureuse liqueur, dont les médecins font le plus grand éloge.*”

The representation our neighbours give of our proceedings, though it may be said to be lively, is by no means agreeable. Monsieur Lefèvre tells us, very gravely, that “English ladies make no scruple of drinking wine, in which whole living vipers have been suffocated, in order to keep up their *embonpoint* and gaiety, prevent wrinkles, and preserve their health.” A notion borrowed from Ralph Williams’s “Physical Rarities” (1651), in which is an equally rational receipt, for braying live swallows, and making “cock-broth, to cure a consumption.”

Among the most singular propositions for fattening the person, that our inquiries have furnished us with, that of flagellation is the most whimsical. In the “Artificial Change-

ling," we read that the Mangones, to make their bodies more fat for sale, "were wont to whip their posteriors and loins, with rods, and so by degrees make them more fleshy;" and it is even said that this is noticed by Galen, as no contemptible stratagem to attract the nourishing particles to the outer parts.

The operation of flagellation has been, in former times, resorted to by ecclesiastical, as well as medical doctors; and some very curious secrets were laid open in the Abbé Boileau's "History of the Flagellants." But the work most to our purpose is that of Meibomius, "De l'Utilité de la Flagellation."

"Jerôme Mercurialis," says Meibomius, "nous apprend que plusieurs médecins, ont ordonné la flagellation à des personnes maigres, pour les engraisser, et leur donner de l'embonpoint."

"Galien, citant à ce sujet les stratagèmes des marchandes d'esclaves, qui se servoient de ce moyen pour les faire paroître plus brillans de fraîcheur, et d'embonpoint, ne laisse aucun doute sur l'efficacité de ce remède. Il est certain, qu'il fait gonfler la chair, et attire à

elle les alimens. Personne n'ignore que la flagellation avec des ortus vertes, a le plus grand succès pour raffermir les membres, et rappeler la chaleur, et le sang, dans les parties qui en sont privées."—*Meibomius, de l'Utilité de la Flagellation*, p. 33.

He adds,—“Combien de nourrices, sans avoir consulté Jérôme Mercurialis, ni Galien, ont recours à ce stratagème qu'elles connoissent par tradition, et claquant les enfans sur les fesses, avant de les rendre à leurs mères, trompent par cet embonpoint factice, et momentané, la confiance des tendres parens qui leur ont confié ces intéressantes créatures !”—*Meibomius, de l'Utilité de la Flagellation*.

One gentleman told me, that he understood mercury was very fattening. Mercury of itself cannot be said to have this effect ; for if it fail to cure the disease for which it is administered, the patient becomes thinner.

Dr. Paris had a case of emaciation in a gentleman who never ate salt—he was persuaded to do so, and recovered.

Those who refer all difficulties to the stomach, and look for comfortable remedies

in "Cookery-books," would do well to visit Paris, where a restaurateur invites patients of this sort, by the following consolatory exhortation written over his door :—

Venite ad me omnes qui stomacho laboratis, et ego
restaurabo vos !

This class of inquirers, who are generally great believers in the efficacy of milk, and cock-broth baths, gelatine, and potatoe-pie ; and are ever on the alert to discover the most nutritious articles of food, should be informed of the notable example of the effect of chocolate, given by the industrious Dr. Mundy, who says " that he knew a man in a desperate consumption, who took a great fancy for chocolate ; and his wife, out of complaisance, drank it often with him : the consequence was, the husband recovered, and the wife had three sons at a birth !" — *Harl. MSS.*

When it is recollected, that human life is lengthened, or abridged, according to the suitableness, or unsuitableness of diet, and that some of our most scientific physicians, have considered the "Materia Alimentaria,"

as important as the “Materia Medica;”—it appears strange, that a “Dietetic Dispensary” has never been established. What an agreeable book the Pharmacopœia of such an institution would be, and how agreeable the practice !

Notwithstanding the encouragement held forth by various remedial processes, and specifics, the task still remains a difficult one—and we must even now agree with what the learned Bulmer said, a century ago, “All bodies may be made leane, but it is impossible to fatten where vehement heat or driness is by nature ; for one may easily substract from Nature, but to add to Nature is difficult, when Virtue does not co-operate : all other creatures, if they have sufficient and proper food, will grow fat and be franked ; whereas men, although they have the best aliment exhibited to them, will not in like manner be fat, the chiefe cause whereof, as to man, is imputed to his temperament.”—*Artificial Changeling*, p. 478.

M E M S.

ON

DIET AND DIETETICS.

MEMS.

ON

DIET AND DIETETICS.

ABSTINENCE.

“ Multi magni morbi curantur Abstinentiâ.”

“ Fast and fear not, you'll need no drop or pill ;
Hunger *may* starve—excess is *sure* to kill.”

HIPPOCRATES does not admit the possibility of fasting above seven days, without death ; but Pliny, and some other writers, allow of a longer time. An inquiry was instituted in France, “ Sur l'Abstinence longue et totale, des Aliments, tant solides que liquides,” in which the possibility is accounted for from natural causes. In the Harleian Miscellany, is the copy of a paper, humbly offered to the Royal Society, by John Reynolds ; containing,

“A Discourse upon the prodigious Abstinence, occasioned by the twelve months’ fasting of Martha Taylor. Proving that, without any miracle, the texture of human bodies may be so altered, that life may be continued without the supplies of meat and drink.”

There are a great variety of curious anecdotes on record, of a similar kind. In Plot’s “History of Staffordshire,” is mentioned John Scott, and Mary Vaughton, of Wigginton, who fasted marvellously. And Ames, in his “Topographical Antiquities,” refers to “A true and admirable history of a Mayden of Confolens, that for the space of three years and more, lived without receiving meat or drinke.”

The Annual Register affords several; in Vol. I. is an affecting account of three persons buried about five weeks in snow, sixty feet deep; and in the same work, 1762, is another of a girl, who subsisted nearly four years on water alone.

Dr. Beddoes tells us, in one of his Essays, that in a certain seminary, an elegant delicacy of appetite had been so successfully inculcated, not by actually professed limitation, but by

the fear of ridicule, that forty girls were fed for two days on a single leg of mutton! This was very similar to the fare of Paul, at Master Cabra's Boarding School, where the broth was so clear, "that a man might have seen to the bottom, had it been ten fathom to it." "This business of starving," says he, "is very hard to be learned at first; I was used to feed like a farmer, and am now brought to fast like an anchorite."

In France, "this business of starving," as Monsieur Paul calls it, is, in some of the religious seminaries, carried to a great extent. A friend of ours, who paid a visit to La Trappe, where, to a rigid abstinence, is added a profound taciturnity, expressing his astonishment at the rigour with which it was enforced, and the difficulty and distaste with which a novice must enter upon the *régime*, was told by the chief of the establishment—"Why, 'tis a little difficult at first—but after a time, there is *nothing so easy, nothing so pleasant!*"

There is in Paris, on the spot where the Bastille formerly stood, a convent, under the patronage of the Duchess d'Angoulême,

where the system is very rigid. They *fast* three months in the year, and it is *maigre* all the rest. Indeed, we are told by Hequet—“On voit très-souvent des Chartreux attaqués de maladies très-dangereuses, ou dans le fort des opérations de chirurgie les plus cruelles, soutenir avec zèle l'état de pénitence auquel ils se sont dévoués; et on a vu plusieurs fois, à la gloire de la Nature guérissante, que la plupart de ces saints Religieux ont recouvré la santé, en ne prenant que des bouillons d'herbes et de grains.”

The “*Diète Absolue*” of a French hospital, is rigorous enough to starve out the most inveterate of maladies. The celebrated physician, Tronchin, used to say—“You gain a great point, if you cut off the enemy's provisions.”

A remarkable case, connected with religious opinions, occurred not very long since. An unhappy man, having given way to a gloomy superstitious turn of mind, resolved to imitate the austerities of the Ascetics of former times.

He accordingly took no other sustenance than *water, slightly flavoured with oranges,*

for sixty days ! The quantity used each day was from half a pint to a pint, and two oranges served for a week !

The change produced by thus abstaining from food, was a *gradual* emaciation, which became at length so extreme, that his whole appearance suggested the idea of a *skeleton*, prepared by drying the muscles upon it, with the various parts of the human anatomy remaining in their natural situations.

On the sixty-first day medical assistance was called in, and the patient consented to take some food ; but as he could not masticate any thing of either an animal, or vegetable nature, panada, broths, &c. were administered in small quantities, increasing them with caution.

In consequence of this judicious treatment, the poor wretch soon evinced signs of *convalescence* ; but in the course of a week he became highly irritated, and died very shortly afterwards.

Dr. Peachell, Master of Magdalen College, Oxford (1690), died of abstinence. Archbishop Sancroft having rebuked him for set-

ting an ill example in the University, by intemperance and loose conduct, he did penance, by fasting four days, after which he would have eaten, but could not.

A person who was desirous of lessening his bulk, was advised to live altogether on vegetable food, but tiring of the plan, altered it to the following mixture, *vis.*—six spoonsful of grits, in three pints and a half of water, boiled down to a little less than three pints of gruel; to this were added, three spoonsful of fine flour (first mixed smoothly, to prevent its being in lumps), when, after a few minutes more boiling, the whole was divided into three parts, and, with the addition of a little sugar, furnished food for four and twenty hours. During this experiment, which was for many months, the person became quite satisfied with the diet, and enjoyed good health and spirits.

Schenkius, Horstius, Fabritius, Poggius, and other learned persons, have given detailed accounts of the marvellous feats of fasting-people, who have not only lived months, but years, without food. “I know,” says Poggius,

“ a man who lived *for two years together without any food!*” Some of our readers may think this pretty well of Poggius, not so Poggius himself; for he gravely states, that, in the reign of the Emperor Lotharius, a long while back, to be sure (anno 1322), “ a girl lived in the same manner for the *space of twelve years!*” To come nearer to our own times, however, Pennant, gives an account of a woman in Ross-shire, who lived a year and three quarters, without meat or drink*!

In hybernating animals, it is not unusual to find extraordinary instances of the duration of life without food. Such was the Dover

* Those who delight in fancies and fairy tales, may read Moses Pitt’s “ Account of Ann Jefferies, fed by fairies,” 1686; Pliny’s “ History of Astoni,” people without mouths, who live on the smell of flowers; or may be amused with a book printed in London, 1611, which gives a narrative of Mrs. Eve Fleigan, who lived after the manner of the Astoni.

“ This maid of Meurs, thirty-and-six years spent,
Fourteen of which she took no nourishment :
Thus pale and wan, she sits sad and alone,
A garden’s all she loves to look upon,”

pig, buried by a fall of the cliff, on December 14, 1810, and dug out on the 3rd of May, 1811, thirty feet under the surface of the earth. He weighed eight score at the time of the accident, and, on being taken out, was reduced to two.

Dr. Luke Wayman, who practised in Royston, and afterwards in London, relates the following remarkable instance of the duration of life, without food :—“ In the time of the hard frost 1739-40, a gentleman, Mr. *Robert Chatteris*, of Eaton, in Huntingdonshire, had three fat sheep put into an orchard, wherein was a summer-house, whose door could be opened and shut by the wind. These sheep were one night lost out of the orchard, and were thought to have been stolen ; and, in order to their recovery, cried. But it happened, that about eleven weeks and some days, after the time they were first missing, they were found in the summer-house, where they had been all the time, without any food ; one dead, and two alive, exceedingly poor and feeble ; so that one died soon, but the other lived and did well.”

Now there is nothing in these two histories

at all inconsistent with each other, or with probability. The first shews, how easily animals after domestication, for innumerable generations, return to their original economy ; and the second, that there is no means of inducing a change in the economy of animals.

The bear is an hybernating animal. In its natural condition it sleeps through the winter. The pig, with naturally similar propensities, was accidentally reduced to its native state. It was shut out from the air during a severe winter, and remained torpid till spring, when it began to awake, and feel the effect of hunger ; the warmth, having by that time, penetrated the loose earth, which covered it. Sheep, are hybernating in a slighter degree ; it is known that they can live some weeks under snow. But they never voluntarily exclude themselves during the winter, nor does a very cold climate seem congenial to them.

To the numerous instances on record, of fasting *human* prodigies, it is impossible to give credit ; whenever such do occur, their existence appears to be analogous to that of hybernating animals.

“All are not men, who bear the human form.”

We see some *bearish*—*brutish*—*sheepish* ; why should not, therefore, their hybernating qualities be called into action by accidental causes, and thus these seeming miracles be accounted for ?

IDIOSYNCRASY.

“ Some men there are, love not a gaping pig ;
Some, that are mad, if they behold a cat.”

So says Shakspeare ; and it appears that the enemies of our nature work upon us, whether we are aware of it or not. In vain we demand a reason of ourselves for what is, or is not to our taste ?

The ancient naturalists, attributed all the effects they could not understand, to sympathy, and antipathy. John Baptist Porta, expresses himself thus :—“ It is,” says he, “ by *sympathy*, an elephant becomes tame at the sight of a ram ; it is by *antipathy*, the vine, shuns the cabbage—hemlock, removes from rue—and that the juice of rue, prevents the effect of the juice of hemlock,” and so the story runs of the cock and the lion—the wolf and the sheep—and the thousand other exemplifications. Sympathy, was one of those useful

terms, that settled a great many difficulties. But it was asked, what is sympathy? “An agreement and conformity of natural qualities, humours, or temperaments, which occasion two things to love one another,” to seek one another, to remain at rest together—

“United by this sympathetic bond,
You grow familiar, intimate, and fond.”

True, but whence this agreement? Whence this bond of union? “Mutual attraction of corpuscles!”—An emission of volatile spirits, or corpuscles, which, proceeding from one person to another, makes a pleasing impression on the retina, or optic nerve, and this impression reaching the brain, affects that organ, so as to make the perception or sensation, perfectly agreeable—and this is sympathy. Some persons, not *sympathizing* with these natural fancies of naturalists, may consider the explanation, on a par with Kattafelto’s “causes of Thunder.” There are others, who would not be satisfied with a definition from Balthazar Gracian, or John Hunter. Corneille describes it best to my taste, when he says—

“ Il est des nœuds secrets, il est des sympathies,
Dont, par les doux rapports des âmes assorties,
S'attachent l'un à l'autre, et se laissent piquer
Par ce je ne sçai quoi qu'ont ne peut expliquer.”

That curious, sympathetic, wonder-working person, Sir Kenelm Digby, has detailed, perhaps, more singular fancies, relating to antipathies, and sympathies, than any other man. He narrates the dire effects of flowers, upon certain people, even to fainting and dying. So obnoxious was a rose to the Lady Heneage, that she had her cheek blistered, says Sir Kenelm, by laying one on it while she slept. It is even stated that Cardinal Caraffa, and a noble Venetian; one of the Barbarage, were confined to their palaces during the rose season, for fear of their lives !

“ Johannes e Querceto, a Parisian, and secretary to Francis I. king of France, was forced to stop his nostrils with bread, when there were any apples at table; and so offensive was their smell to him, that if an apple had been held near his nose, he would fall a bleeding. Such a peculiar, and innate hatred to apples, had the noble family of Fystates in Aquitain.” SCHENCK, *Obs. Med.* l. vii. p. 890.

“ I saw a noble countess,” said Horstius, “ who (at the table of a count) tasting of some udder of beef, had her lips suddenly swelled thereby, who, observing that I took notice of it, told me that she had no dislike to that kind of dish, but as oft as she did eat of it she was troubled in this manner, the cause of which she was utterly ignorant of.”

Bruverinus knew a girl, sixteen years of age, who, up to that time, had lived entirely on milk ; and could not bear the smell of bread, the smallest particle of which she would discover, by the smell.

Many cannot sit at table with cheese. Martin Schookius has written a treatise, “ De aversione Casei.”

L’Abbe — lost his voice if he *smelt* hot lobsters—but if they were cold, he could *eat* them.

An antipathy to pork is very common. Shenckius tells us of one, who would immediately swoon as often as a pig was set before him, even though it were enclosed in paste—he would fall down as one that is dead, nor return to himself till the pig was taken from table.

Marshal Albret fainted away, whenever he saw the head of a boar. Hereupon, Bussi forms a sort of ludicrous case of conscience, whether a man who was to fight against the Marshal, should, in honour, be allowed to carry with him in his left hand, the head of a boar. "I have seen," says Montaigne, "some run away at the smell of apples, as if a musket were presented at them; others frightened out of their wits at a mouse, and others not able to abide the sight of cream, or the stirring of a feather bed.

The mildest medicines create in some, as great disturbance, as the most violent. Manna, and senna, are dreadfully distressing to some persons. One grain of calomel, has been known to cause a salivation for weeks, and to produce an instantaneous eruption. Opium, frequently produces violent irritation of the skin, and many judicious physicians never prescribe it to strangers, without inquiring whether they have taken it before, and with what effect. Fallopius mentions an abbess of Pisa, to whom he often prescribed pills, who never swallowed

them, but was speedily cured, by merely crushing them with her fingers.

Cornelius Agrippa relates a story of one, “*Qui solo aspectu medecinæ movebatur ad agendum.*” Old Daniel Turner, who delighted in the marvellous, goes further than this, and says he knew a gentleman, “whose Idiosyncrasy was so admirable,” that he would be distressed even by the sound of a word.

The odour from ipecacuanha, has produced equally violent effects. A servant maid, putting her lady's cap into a wardrobe, became instantly affected with nausea. No notice was taken of it, being considered accidental. A few days afterwards, going to the same wardrobe, she was again seized with nausea, and sickness. She then said she was sure there must be ipecacuanha there, and so it proved; for her lady's husband had bought a box of ipecacuanha lozenges, and unconsciously left them in the wardrobe.

NURSERY MEMS.

FORMERLY, all the rules, and regulations of life, particularly nursery regulations, were drawn from the “Domestic Medicine.” With some, “Buchan” was next to the Bible. These were facetiously denominated “*Buchaneers*.” “Buchan, Sir, has done more towards improving the health and shape of our girls, than any man living,” said one old lady; “he popped them all into cold water at Christmas!”—“But for Buchan, my poor husband would have died *ten years sooner than he did*,” rejoined a young widow. “Ah! he was a fine man!” echoed a third.

Buchan, however, died one day, and with him were buried, many of the plans by which some people had been braced into health, and others braced out of the world. The late Margravine of Anspach, was, at an early period of her life, so reduced by weakness, that a sister only two years older than herself, actually carried

her about in her arms ; to give her strength, cold bathing was ordered, which produced an ague, from which she with difficulty recovered.

We have heard the case described of a poor infant, who was preposterously dipped every morning into *iced* water. The dread of the little creature, as she was carried towards the scene of her suffering, was most tragically evinced, by her violent trembling, and clinging to her nurse, for she was not old enough to speak ; but when she was held over the bath, preparatory to the remorseless plunge, her limbs became almost convulsed, and her soft and baby face, which one might imagine incapable of any expression, was momentarily visited with a premature character, in the deformity of its terror ; and the beseeching looks cast towards her father, who yielding to injudicious advice, used to sanction the operation. This child died of hydrocephalus.

The barbarous practice of *hardening* children, then went out of fashion. Our ears are no longer assailed, with the convulsive screams of half-drowned children, whose worthy pa-

rents believed they were sacrificing *themselves*, for the good of their offspring. What stuff, have we not heard about “inuring children to hardiness!” These excellent people forgot to confer the Spartan constitution, before they introduced the Spartan discipline ; yet, against the experience of common sense, and the convulsive screams of baby eloquence, they confidently hoped to turn nature from her course. Who would have ventured to oppose the sacrifice of such amiable feelings? Who could have uncourteously hinted, that the sudden chilling of the skin repels capillary action, and thereby increases the vascular action of internal parts?

This system, however, was succeeded by another equally pernicious. It might be called the “Coddling system ;” and children, instead of being *braced*, were *stuffed* to death. The disorders of children, were discovered to arise from wind. Wind, was the effect of emptiness, consequently the more they cried, the more they were stuffed:—“Godfrey’s Cordial,” “Dalby’s Carminative,” and thick pap, being administered in proportion: the nurse, like a

skilful pilot, steering according to the way the “wind blew.”

This system, like the other, had its day, till good sense, and good nature overcame it. But if we have got rid of some of these prejudices, are we still, in our enlightened times, exempt from error? Have we not very learned ladies now-a-days, whose “Domestic Medicine” is equally potent? Woe be to the child with a hot head, if his mother has ever heard of “Hydrocephalus acutus.” Woe be to “papa’s darling,” if mamma *understands* the administration of calomel! “Doctor,” said a lady to Reynolds one day, “I have sent for you because *we* cannot get on with this child;—*we* have given five grains of calomel, and repeated the dose, but all without success!” The child was in a state which medical men will understand; and which extorted from the Doctor the emphatic exclamation—“Calomel will soon be measured by the spoonful!” Within these few days, a gentleman, whose excellent lady is skilled in Domestic Medicine, in answer to the question, “How d’ye do?” replied, “I am very well, only a little *over* calomel-

ized!"—"Over calomelized! By whom?"—"By an amateur practitioner!" Strange! that one who would not dream of understanding the machinery of a watch, should think the complicated machinery of the human frame, more easily comprehended!

Mr. Brande, in some very sensible remarks on this subject, uses a very appropriate epithet. He calls it *domestic empiricism*! "At a time," says he, "when *domestic empiricism* is so prevalent, as at present, it is important to point out the dangers which may arise from the uses, or rather abuses, of the most simple remedies."

"Every medical practitioner must have repeatedly witnessed the serious, and sometimes fatal consequences, attendant upon the imprudent use of the stronger medicines, which are so extensively supplied for family consumption, particularly preparations of antimony, mercury, and opium; which, under a great variety of seducing forms and titles, are constantly employed; they are not, however, aware of the prejudicial effects of magnesia." He then proceeds to state the case of

a lady, who, in the course of two years and a half, took from nine to ten pounds weight of magnesia; and notices another, in which from four to six pounds of insoluble magnesia, were found in the colon of a deceased nobleman.

The great science that watches over health, is as complicated, as it is important. It requires attainments of the highest order—knowledge of every kind—and after the experience of ages, still remains, to the most learned and most skilful, “a conjectural art.” While private quackery, like public quackery, being founded in ignorance, and having nothing to conjecture—has nothing to fear.

DIETETIC.

“ Despise no new accident of your body, but ask advice of it.”—BACON.

“ HE that would eat much, must eat little,” says the proverb ; or, “ temperance lengthens existence.”

Cornaro had a merry saying, that would not be credited in the city, *viz.*—“ that of all parts of a feast, that which one *leaves*, does one most good ! ”

Those are the most healthy, who have nature for their cook, — necessity for their caterer ; who have no other doctor, than the sun, and fresh air, and no other physic, than temperance, and exercise.

Temperance, according to Sir William Temple, consists in a regular and simple diet, limited by every man’s experience, of his own easy digestion. It is moderation. We may be intemperately abstemious, as well as intemperately luxurious.

Leontinus, who was a stout man at 108 years of age, and a proverb for strength and vigour, said, his rule was, never to do any thing merely for pleasure.

“ To assert, that such or such a thing is unwholesome, without a knowledge of the person for whom it is intended, is like a sailor saying, that the wind is fair, without knowing the port to which the vessel is bound.”—VAN SWIETEN.

“ A man is a fool or a physician at forty.”

By this time, if ever, he must know what is best for him, have studied his gratifications, and their effects, both morally and physically speaking. He finds, perhaps, that drinking at dinner assists *his* digestion ; while another, on similar grounds, will maintain a contrary practice : which latter is indeed the present prevailing fashion. Our French neighbours, deem this nonsense ; however this be, I know several persons, who, defying all rules and decorum, invariably call for beer after soup !

On the same plan, a Frenchman will eat two dozen oysters during dinner, to *improve* his appetite; and an Englishman the same number, to get *rid* of it; while an Italian, after devouring a platterful of macaroni, and *stufato* of beef, sighingly exclaims, that he feels “*uno dolcissimo languore dello stomacho.*”

“Hunger sharpens wit.”

Those faculties which, before dinner, are capable of engaging in the most acute, and sublime disquisitions, are found, by general experience, to be comparatively dull, and stupid after it. “I know not how it is,” said a celebrated writer, “but all the philosophy, in which I was so warmly engaged in the morning, appears like nonsense as soon as I have dined.”

“Some people grow angry as they get hungry.”

Wealthy people, though exempt from labour, are subject to whims and absurdities, that expose them to diseases, from which the

meagre carcass of poverty is exempt. Hygeia, disdains to become the slave of Plutus.

Owen, the poet, has the following epigram respecting Diet :—

“ Si tarde cupis esse Senex, utaris oportet
Vel medico medicè, vel medico modicè :
Sumpta cibus tanquam lædit medicina salutem ;
At sumptus prodest ut medicina cibus.”

The first book ever printed on this subject, to my knowledge, is “ The Regimen of Life,” 1544, translated from the French, by Phayer. Next to this, is a Treatise, by Nonnius, entitled “ Dieteticon, sive de re Cibaria,” *vulgo*, Peptic Precepts. Then the “ Good Huswives’ Jewell,” 1596. *Cum multis aliis*.

In the next century, we have Sir Theodore Mayerne, writing “ Experiments in Cookery, with the best way of Preserving,” 1658. Sir Edmund King published, “ De re Culinaria ;” and Dr. Lister “ De Opsoniis et Condimentis,” being an olio of the soups and sauces, of the ancients, 1703.

The Egyptians, a wise people, especially in medical concerns, thought so much depended on diet, that they dieted their kings,

and prescribed by law, both the quality, and the quantity of their food. It is to be lamented, that these “Bills of Fare*” have not been preserved to this time; and, though God forbid! that we should ever live to see the Legislature dictating to Sir Henry Halford; yet, if the Egyptian regulations for different ranks of society, had been handed down to us, we might have had Parliament interfering with the luxury of modern tables, and the Cabinet Ministers, by way of example, dining like their great grandfathers, on a pudding and a joint.

Some people have imagined, as has been shewn before, not without considerable probability, that animal food communicates its qualities, with its nourishment. In this supposition, Achilles, who was not only born, but bred a hero, was nourished with the marrow of lions. It was on this principle, that

* An honest Lōdoner, at Paris, being presented, at a Restaurateur's, with a *bill of fare*, containing *one hundred and ninety dishes*, returned it to the waiter, saying he had made a mistake, and brought him a *bill of lading*.

Prince Maurice of Nassau, always employed the English troops, *as soon* as they joined him, whilst, to use his own expression, “ they had a piece of beef in their stomachs.”

An old-fashioned correspondent, expresses great apprehensions that the present mode of living, will degenerate our countrymen, and that the next generation, will be the pale-faced puny sons, of compound *Entremets*, instead of the lusty offspring, of beef and pudding.

With respect to vegetable diet, as in the days of Hudibras, there are

“ Some for abolishing black-pudding,
And eating nothing with the blood-in,”—

a very useful class of society, in the present time of “ high prices*,” and with whom we should

* An old friend of mine, who remembers the school regulation, that “ those who ate most pudding, should have most meat,” writes very gravely, that one great cause of the excessive price of the necessaries of life, and particularly butchers’ meat, is, that *pudding does not come first* upon table, as it used to do in our forefathers’ time. Upon the average, he asserts, that at least one-third of the butchers’ meat made use of within the Bills of Mortality might be saved ; and the people

not quarrel, if they confined their herbivorous notions to themselves; but when, like the domestic empirics before noticed, they carry their speculations into the nursery, we feel very much inclined to urge the claims of our young friends; and, as far as our feeble effort can, protect them from the physic of one party, and the food of the other. How ought we to bless ourselves, we were not born of mercurial parents, or a root-eating race. Hear what a philosopher of this latter school says, “our children are perfect Pythagoreans. A beef-steak is an absurdity to them; a mutton-chop, a solecism in terms; a cutlet, a word absolutely without a meaning; a butcher is nonsense, except as a hero!” And all this is called “a Return to Nature.”—“*Naturam expellas furcâ; tamen usque recurret.*” By

would be as well fed, if not better. The quantity of animal food which is thrown into the stomach, without sufficient mastication, is the great cause of most of the diseases with which the inhabitants of London are afflicted. Whereas, if the daily food were simple, such as milk, puddings, vegetables, &c. with but little of the former, the people would be healthy.

way of experiment, I would place a beef-steak before the youngsters :—at any rate, we agree with the epigrammatic sentiments of the critic :—

“ Abstain from flesh !” Richardus cries,
 “ ’Twill make you candid, just, and wise ;”
 “ Just, candid, wise !—Pythagorean,
 Feed *thou* on *pulse*—*roast-beef* feed *we* on !”

If it were possible, to point out precisely what articles of food are innocent, and what decidedly hurtful, we might expect the sensible part of the community would voluntarily forego, the *lædentia*, and by controlling their inclinations, preserve their health.

The first person we read of, as having studied and taught, what was noxious, and what was really nourishing to man, was Isis, wife of Osiris, King of Egypt, a country where the most *palateable* food, was found to be most *hurtful*, and, for the benefit derived from her instructions and advice, to avoid the *pleasing-hurtful*, she was called *υγεια*.

Few writers on this subject, are able to speak from such experimental practice, in their own persons, as Sanctorius, and Stark; and although the latter sacrificed his life in the inquiry, yet idiosyncrasy, and various powers of digestion, make it difficult to arrive at any certain conclusion—a difficulty, which is increased, by the contradictory evidence, furnished by the general testimony of mankind. Let us exemplify this, by some of the ordinary articles of daily use; and, first, of

FISH.

“Post pisces nux sit, post carnes caseus esto.”

Nonnius wrote a book “*De Usu Piscium*,” called *Ichthyophagia*, in which fish is shewn to be the most salutary, and proper aliment, for all descriptions of persons, sick or well, fat or lean, old or young. This, seems to have agreed with the general opinion of the ancient physicians, many of whom have written, “*De Salubri Piscium Alimento*.”

From the universality of these doctrines,

there was a period, when fish was a greater object of monopoly, than in these days; and it is related of Queen Aterbates, that, fearing there should not be enough to regale their sovereign, she interdicted her subjects from the use of fish diet. Luckily, however, for our kingdom, Philip II. of Spain, adopted a different opinion; and, entertaining the philosophical notion, that fish were nothing but element congealed, or a jelly of water, he persuaded his consort, Queen Mary, to let the Fish-mongers' Company, and the salesmen at Billingsgate, follow their old avocations.

OYSTERS.

“A Frenchman eats them to get an appetite—an Englishman to get rid of it.”

Every one knows that oysters are a favourite dish in France; and that a native of that country, often begins his dinner, by swallowing half a hundred of them in a raw state. A treatise has just appeared in Paris, under

the singular title of the “*Manual of the Amateur of Oysters* ;” in which oysters, are considered in every point of view, literary, medicinal, and gastronomic. They are subdivided into *forty-six kinds* ; and we are quite flattered to find, that the one, which is deemed most delicate, goes by the name of “ the English Oyster.”

Apicius, in Trajan’s time, knew how to preserve oysters ; but Peto, of Sherborne-lane, was the first to discover the possibility of their transportation in barrels ; in which, under the name of “ Oystericus,” he conveyed the “ Natives ” to all parts of the kingdom.

P O R K.

“ Thus saith the Prophet of the Turk :
Good Mussulmen, abstain from pork.”

Some fashionable Doctors, differ with Mahomet, on this subject. BACON, and BOYLE, used formerly to be the theme of admiration ; but all the conversation, now is, about *bacon*

and *bile*, which have been discovered to have such attractions to each other, that the “bilous,” at Bath and Cheltenham, are eating *fat bacon* for breakfast. At another watering place, not far distant, similar properties have been found in *mutton chops*! It is probably on this account, that it has been proposed to give a new nomenclature for fat substances. “Mais il faut que cette vérité soit bien simple, pour avoir échappé à tous les philosophes!”

The general opinion is, that pork is difficult of digestion. Fuseli, the painter, used to summon the night-mare to his aid by supping on pork-chops. In former times, however, sucking-pig, was considered in the nursery to be as efficacious as “dill-water.” And a modern lexicographer, not being able to reconcile such discrepancies, in the article “Pig’s Petty-Toes,” settles the difficulty, by denominating it, “a dish, of which the author of this dictionary, is extremely fond.”

CHEESE.

“ Cheese is a peevish elf;
It digests all things but itself.”

“ I presume you never eat cheese ?” said a delicate lady to a stout gentleman. “ Unless you wish to die a martyr to rheumatism, let me advise you never to eat cheese.” The lady might as easily have persuaded an Irishman, to think potatoes poison, as to have persuaded a gentleman of Cambrian descent, that cheese was either indigestible, or unwholesome ; whose motto is—

“ My cheese, my digestion.”

The French, who are lively philosophers, and constantly making discoveries, have found out that rats, occasionally require the operation of lithotomy. Monsieur Morand, M. D., enters into very prolix details, to prove that this arises from their eating *too much* cheese. We remember to have read of an English Doctor (Stark), who died of a similar excess.

Since the days of Sanctorius, no man has carried Dietetical, and Statical, experiments, to such an extent. He fell indeed a sacrifice to them. The account of his life and writings, by Dr. Carmichael Smyth (1788), are well worth the inquirer's attention.

S A L T.

“*Sal sapit omnia,*”

Is the creed of the Salters' Company. It has been considered not only necessary for man, but essential to birds and beasts: hence, we find nature, bountifully supplying it, throughout the habitable world. The universality of its application, renders it an object of taxation in all countries; and in Holland, making a culprit eat his bread without salt, was considered the severest punishment that could be inflicted; as he would inevitably, be destroyed by worms, before the time of his interment.

Swift, though he condescended to eat it, thought it useless, and only introduced by

luxury, as a provocative for drinking. Other learned persons have imagined, that it gave zest to the intellect; from the notion that there were some very stupid nations, by whom it was not used. Horace seems to have entertained this opinion, for, wishing to describe the ignorance of certain people, he remarks,

“ ——— Illi non æquora norunt,
Nec *sale* conditis noverunt carnibus uti.”

Plato and others have called it “Corpus divinum”—“Deo amicissimum.” It has certainly many excellent medical properties;—our grandmothers used it as a dentifrice; little boys, to catch sparrows; and farmers still make use of it, to fatten pigs, and improve the soil.

SUGAR.

“ That which preserves apples and plums,
Will also preserve life and lungs.”

Such, however, was not the opinion of the illustrious Willis, who maintained, that the scorbutic complaints of the English, and half

their other maladies, were caused by its use. Sugar has generally been supposed nutritious; and West Indians tell us, that negroes fatten on sugar-cane. Majendie thinks otherwise; at any rate, dogs will not exist upon it, as proved by many, we must hope, not useless experiments, of starvation, *novo modo*.

All animals eat sugar, except cats, who have the greatest antipathy to it. Grimalkin will, however, strange to say, take sugared milk with avidity.

OBSOLETE PASTRY.

The ancient Sicilian cheese-cake, whatever were its ingredients, concerning which commentators are not agreed, seems to have been considered the greatest possible dainty, and usually concluded a feast. This circumstance, gave rise to a royal witticism. King Philip of Macedon, going to sup with one of his courtiers, was accompanied by so many attendants, that his host had not a proportionable entertainment for them. The

king immediately undertook to remedy this inconvenience, by advising each man, in a whisper, to "keep a place for the cheese-cake." Of this, the guests indeed, were disappointed; but the supper was found amply sufficient.

The time has been, when certain puddings and pies, excited great heats and animosities, in December, amongst those who, at all other periods of the year, would eat them with great satisfaction. We are not old enough, to remember, the puritanical horrors of Christmas pies, and plum-porridge, nor the wonder-working, curative properties, of the miller's pudding, mentioned in the "Transactions of the Royal College of Physicians," the receipt of which, was thus recorded, by Sir George Baker, when the county of Essex resounded with the exploits of the "Miller of Bilericay."

"The pudding, which was his sole support during two years, was made as follows:—Three pints of skimmed milk, boiling, were poured on one pound of the best sea-biscuit, broken into pieces. This was done over night; and these ingredients were left to

stand together, until the following morning, when two eggs were added. This compound, being boiled in a cloth about the space of an hour, became a pudding of sufficient consistence to be cut with a knife. Of this, his quantity used to be one pound and a half, at four or five o'clock in the morning, as his breakfast, and the same at noon, as his dinner; after which he abstained from food until the next day. But having grown fatter under the use of this diet, he judged it necessary to quit it, as being too nutritious; and, during three months, he lived on the following composition : *viz.* one pound of coarse flour, and one pint of water, boiled together. This he was at first much pleased with; but afterwards found it disagreeable to his stomach, and not easily digestible. The pudding which he now uses, is composed of one pound of flour, of which the best kind of sea-biscuit is made, boiled with a pint and a half of skimmed milk, without any other addition."

THE most frugal system of house-keeping, on record, was that of Roger Crabb, the Buckinghamshire hermit, in the seventeenth century, who allowed himself three farthings a week !

Dr. Franklin, lived on bread and water for a fortnight, at the rate of ten pounds of bread per week, and was stout and healthy.

A gentleman who had been a prisoner, and obliged to live on a small quantity of barley, became so accustomed to eat very little, and often, that he never sat down to stated meals, but carried biscuit, and gingerbread nuts in his pocket, of which he ate from time to time.

Prynne, "Voluminous Prynne," as he was called, seldom took any regular dinner, but would every three hours or more, be found maunching a roll of bread, and refreshing his exhausted spirits with ale, brought to him by his servant.

Mr. —, aged sixty, has, for upwards of ten years, made only one meal a day.

Sir John Pringle knew a lady, ninety years of age, who lived on the pure fat of meat.

Mossop, the actor, is said to have adopted various food, according to the line of character he was to represent. Broth for one; roast pork for tyrants; steaks for "Measure for Measure;" boiled mutton for lovers; pudding for Tancred, &c.

Dr. Gower, of Chelmsford, had a patient, who lived for ten years on a pint of tea, daily, now and then chewing half-a-dozen raisins and almonds, but not swallowing them. Once a month, she eat a morsel of bread the size of a nutmeg; but frequently abstaining from food for many weeks together.

Dined with Dr. C——, this day (Nov. 6th, 1802); he mentioned a case of a gentleman who had never tasted fish, flesh, or fowl, but whose diet had constantly been bread and milk. He was once, in travelling, being very hungry, tempted to taste a small piece of chicken; but it had such an effect on him, as to occasion fainting almost instantaneously.

Mrs. F., of Therfield in Hertfordshire, now a stout healthy woman, never tasted animal food till she was twenty years of age.

Brassavolus reports of the younger daughter of Frederick, king of Naples, "that she could

not eat any kind of flesh, nor so much as taste of it ; and, as oft as she put any bit of it into her mouth, she was seized with a vehement syncopé, and falling to the earth, and rolling herself thereupon, would lamentably shriek out. This she would continue to do for the space of half an hour after she was returned to herself.”—TURNER’S *History of Remarkable Providences*, 1697, folio, part 2, c. 2. § 6.

The late Duke of Portland broke a blood-vessel in his lungs, when twenty-seven years of age. He was attended by Dr. Warren, forty ounces of blood were taken from him in a few hours. He lived on bread and water for six weeks ; at the end of which time, he was allowed *one boiled smelt*.

From this time he lived with the most rigid temperance, and never drank wine, or malt liquor. He took a drachm of powdered bark every morning in a glass of water, which, with a moderate breakfast, was all he was in the habit of taking, till a late dinner in the evening. In the early part of his life, he was confined to his room, three months at a time, with the gout. In his latter days, though occasionally affected by it, was never violently so.

His father was gouty, his mother not ; but his grandmother died of this disorder, a little above forty years of age.

The monks of Monte Santo (Mount Athos) never taste animal food ; they live on vegetables, olives, and cheese. In 1806, one of their fraternity was in good health, at the great age of one hundred and twenty years.

Dr. Hecquet, who died at Paris, 1773, had not eaten any meat, or drank wine, for thirty years. He was the Sangrado, of Cervantes.

HENRY WELBY died 1636.

Flesh he abhorred, and wine ; he drank small beer—
Cow's milk, and water-gruel were his cheer.

OFFLEY.

Offley, three dishes had of daily roast,
An egg, an apple, and (the third) a toast.

Hasselquist, in his travels in the Levant, relates the following singular fact : “ Above a thousand Abyssinians, who were destitute of provisions on a journey to Cairo, lived for two months on gum arabic ; and arrived at Cairo, without any unusual sickness, or mortality.”

An old Effendi, whose back was bent like a bow, was in the daily habit of taking four ounces of rice—thirty cups of coffee—three drachms of opium—and besides, smoking sixty pipes of tobacco.

A foreign physician has declared, that he should have died an hundred times of indigestion, if he had not accustomed himself, to take several cups of strong coffee after dinner. This is quite enough to increase its consumption immediately.

In Queen Elizabeth's time, the breakfast for "my lorde and my lady," consisted of "half a chine of mutton, or ells a chyne of beef boiled;" and the children had "a chikyng, or ells three mutton bonys boiled, with certain quarts of beer and wine."

DIGESTION.

Francis Bathalia, the stone eater, *it is said*, converted his flinty food into sand in seven days.

Mr. — cannot digest an apple, it immediately causes pain in the stomach, like a stone, or any other hard body. He can, however, eat any quantity of toasted cheese.

Mr. — cannot masticate rice—this simplest of all food he never eats—and the reason he assigns for it is, that a relation of his could not, or would not eat potatoes; he had quarrelled with Potato-Pome in Jamaica.

Some have great power in digesting salted meats;—ham, bacon, salted fish, are taken for breakfast in considerable quantity, without any inconvenience; these persons are never thirsty.

Sir James Earle, and Dr. Robert Hallifax, attended a child, six years old, on whom scarlet strawberries constantly produced irritation in the kidneys.

Opium and senna, produce instantaneous effects upon the skin; oil of almonds does the same, and makes the face swell, as in erysipelas. Mr. H——, of D., cannot eat almonds without a scarlet rash immediately appearing in his face.

The small black currant, from Zante, is rarely or ever digested by children, though it is a frequent ingredient in their food.

Mrs. B. cannot take milk without being instantly affected by it. Disguised in any manner, it never fails to manifest its effects.

New honey is obnoxious to many, and not unfrequently produces violent cholera.

Donatus knew a young gentleman, who could not eat an egg without its causing his lips to swell, and bringing purple spots out on his face.

The Prior of —, who laboured under a periodical complaint of the stomach, found relief in eating nuts; and consumed, with impunity, many bushels in the course of the year.

There are men, who are possessed of such powers of digestion, as never to feel themselves incommoded by quantity, or the most heterogeneous qualities of their food. These prodigies of nature, needing no restraint, are dangerous companions.

HEALTH.

There are many who think, if they keep a doctor in pay*, they may do as they please—he is responsible for their health, let them eat or drink as they may. So the heathens offered sacrifices for health, and at the same time, fed so intemperately on the residue,

* An old epigram says—

“Health is a jewel true; which, when we buy,

Physicians value it accordingly :”

which, probably, suggested the following advertisement :—

“Wanted for a family, who have bad health, a sober, steady person, in the capacity of Doctor, Surgeon, Apothecary, and Man-midwife. He must occasionally act as butler, and dress hair and wigs. He will be required sometimes to read prayers, and to preach a sermon every Sunday. The reason of this advertisement is, that the family cannot any longer afford the expences of the physical tribe, and wish to be at a certain expence for their bodies and souls. A good salary will be given.”

as to bring upon themselves sickness. This is as futile, as saying grace over a debauch, or expecting health from a feast; which, Persius says, though Jupiter himself were ever so inclined to grant, Luxury would not suffer.

Hence it is, that such as live in opulence, and ease, have not the athletic soundness, and vigour, of those in humbler life; for, besides the luxurious living, the indolence of the higher orders is to be taken into account. Dr. South, in one of his sermons, touches this point, after his usual manner, in which sense and quaintness, are strangely combined. "Nor, is excess," says he, "the only thing by which sin mauls, and breaks men in their health, and the comfortable enjoyment of themselves thereby; but many are brought to a very ill and languishing habit of body, by mere *idleness*; and idleness is both itself a great sin, and the cause of many more. The husbandman returns from the field, and from manuring his ground, strong and healthy, because innocent and laborious. You will find no *diet-drinks*, no *boxes of pills*, nor

gally-pots amongst his provisions: no, he neither *speaks*, nor *lives French*; he is not *so much a gentleman* (forsooth). His meals are coarse and short, his employments warrantable, his sleep certain, and refreshing; neither interrupted with the lashes of a guilty mind, nor the aches of a crazy body; and when old age comes upon him, it comes alone, bringing no evil with it but itself: but when it comes to wait upon a great and worshipful sinner, (who for many years together has had the reputation of *eating well*, and *doing ill*), it comes (as it ought to do to a person of such quality) attended with a long train and retinue, of rheums, coughs, catarrhs, and dropsies, together with many painful girds and convulsions, which are at least called the *Gout*. How does such an one go about, or is carried rather, with his body bending inward, his head shaking, and his eyes always watering (instead of weeping) for the sins of his ill-spent youth? Old age seizes upon such a person, like fire upon a rotten house; it was rotten before, and must have fallen of itself; so that it is no more

than one ruin preventing another.”—SOUTH, Vol. ii.

These people may be said to shake the glass, to make the sand run quicker; and Æsculapius deemed it not incumbent on physicians, to attend such, who, on their recovery, would only return to their former excesses. This might be very proper for a heathen god, to tell a heathen people, but would not suit the Æsculapii of modern times.

Great allowance must be made, for the difficulty of changing long, and deeply-rooted habits; and, while we would recommend such a change to the debauchee, we should do well to imitate the indulgent parent, who, ever anxious to promote the true interests of his children, permits his strict discipline to relax occasionally into the enjoyment of innocent pleasure. We should inculcate at the same time, the observance of that difficult virtue, self-denial, well worthy the attention of those, who would lighten the shadows of old age, by retaining a stock of health, and good temper to the last.

It has been said, that “the man who hath never been sick, doth not know the value of health.” He would ask, what it means? Suppose we refer him to Pythagoras. He calls it Harmony! A pithy and short definition.

Plato, understands it to be a *Symmetry of constitution*, that *εὐκρασία*, or good temperature, and fitting conformation, of all parts to their several uses.

Paracelsus, thought that health, depended on the due proportion of salt, sulphur, and mercury, of which “*three first substances*,” as he calls them, the human body is composed.

Other philosophers, and physicians, ran mightily upon a *balance of humours*, and *temperaments*; a sort of geometry in our composition, which might be overturned, by a little more or less, thrown into the scale, which regulated particular parts.

Hippocrates, who is admitted by the College of Physicians, as great authority, supposed a healthy state of body, to consist of the *humours*, *spirits*, and *solids*, in their *natural* state, balancing one another, in

quality, quantity, and due mixture. This *lucid* interpretation of health, satisfied the world for a long time, till William Hervey, by discovering the circulation, disconcerted many of the comfortable theories, which had served the learned for centuries.

As our acquaintance with animal economy extended, our ideas concerning health, became proportionably accurate; and we find the learned Mead, by making a practical application of this discovery, discomfiting the Hippocratic *phalanx*, of *solids*, and *fluids*; *quantity*, and *quality*. He affirms “that life itself, so far as respects the body, is, in one word, the *circulation of the blood*; that its regularity, is the standard of health, as its irregularity, the occasion of disease—and death.”

To come nearer to our own times, Quincy thought it, the faculty of performing, all actions proper to human body, in the most perfect manner.

Dr. Lettsom, who wrote largely on this subject, proposed a thermometer for temperance, and intemperance. So Health, may be thrown into a *scale of degrees*, and compose a sort of hygieometer, as thus:—

ATHLETIC ;

Moderate HEALTH ;

Declining ;

Nearer HEALTH than Sickness ;

Nearer Sickness than HEALTH :

SICKNESS ;

Mending or Convalescence ;

Nearer Sickness than HEALTH ;

Nearer HEALTH than Sickness ;

Moderate HEALTH ;

ATHLETIC.

Leaving these disquisitions, however, to be settled by the Doctors, we may venture to say, that the four ordinary secrets of health, are—early rising—exercise—personal cleanliness—and leaving the table unoppressed.

When a family rises early in the morning, conclude the house to be well governed, and the inmates healthy.

With respect to exercise, there is a simple, and benevolent law of nature—"Earn, and you may enjoy." Secure good digestion, by exercise.

"To ride on horseback be your cue,
And let not every quack *ride you*."

As much, perhaps, may be said concerning ablution, as exercise. Dispel the ill humours at the pores. Cleanliness is a virtue, though not the first in rank, the first, at least, in necessity. A dirty old hypochondriacal woman, attempted to drown herself; she was taken out of the water, underwent an active rubbing, and was not only restored to life, but to health; from which it was inferred, that the most melancholy part of her disease, was owing to her want of cleanliness.

I know it is very difficult to command attention, by preaching on gloomy subjects, or the iron restraints of necessity. Old Jeremy Taylor says—"It would have been of no use to talk to Apicius, of the secrets of the other world, and of immortality; that saints and angels eat not! The fat glutton would have stared a while, and fallen asleep. But if you had discoursed well and knowingly of a lamprey, a large mullet, or a boar, *animal propter convivium natum*, and had sent him a cook from Asia to make new sauces, he would have attended carefully, and taken in your discourses greedily."

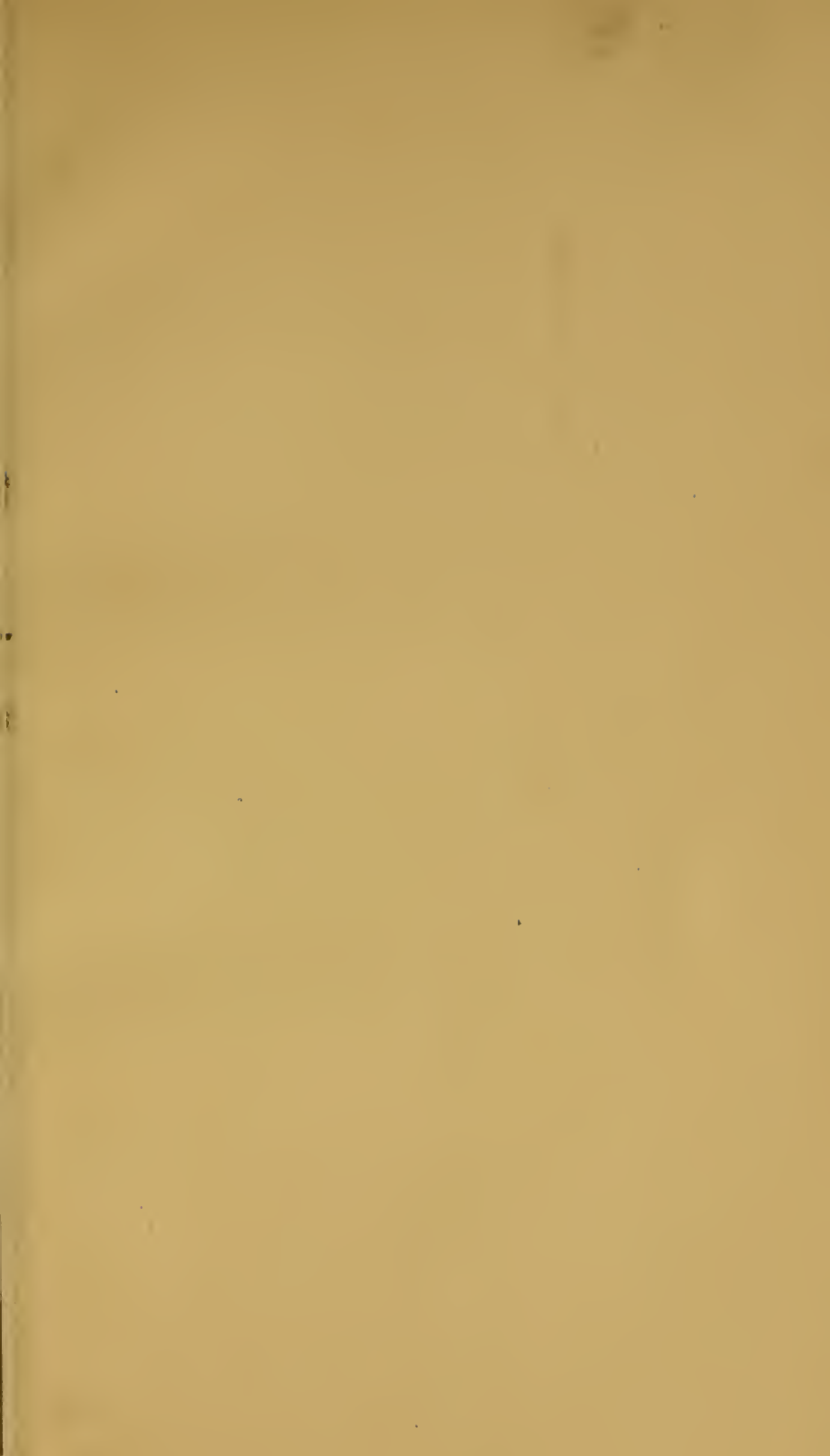
On the subject of temperance, that sturdy moralist, Johnson, speaking of a work that recommended it, said, "such a book should come out every thirty years, dressed in the mode of the times."

" Abstinence is an easy virtue,
Temperance is a difficult one."

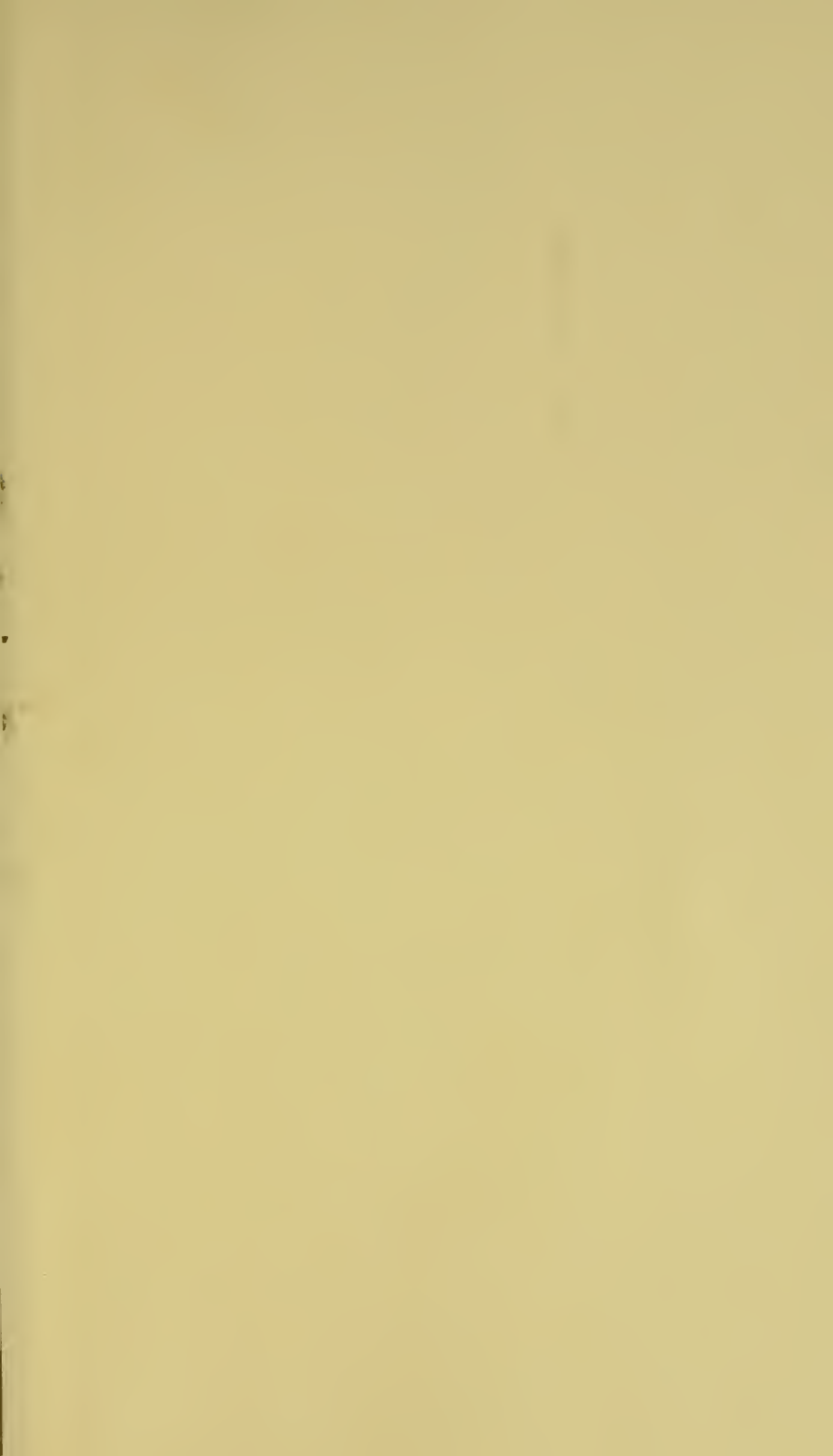
In conclusion, should it be thought that the subject has not been treated throughout with sufficient gravity, I would beg to remind the reader, that some of the most serious of our profession, made their lectures, both " plesaunte and pytyfulle:" and that these commentaries, are not offered as an "*exquisite censure*," concerning this matter; but to induce its being taken in hand, and "laboured by those, who have learning and leisure, to handle the argument more pythelie."

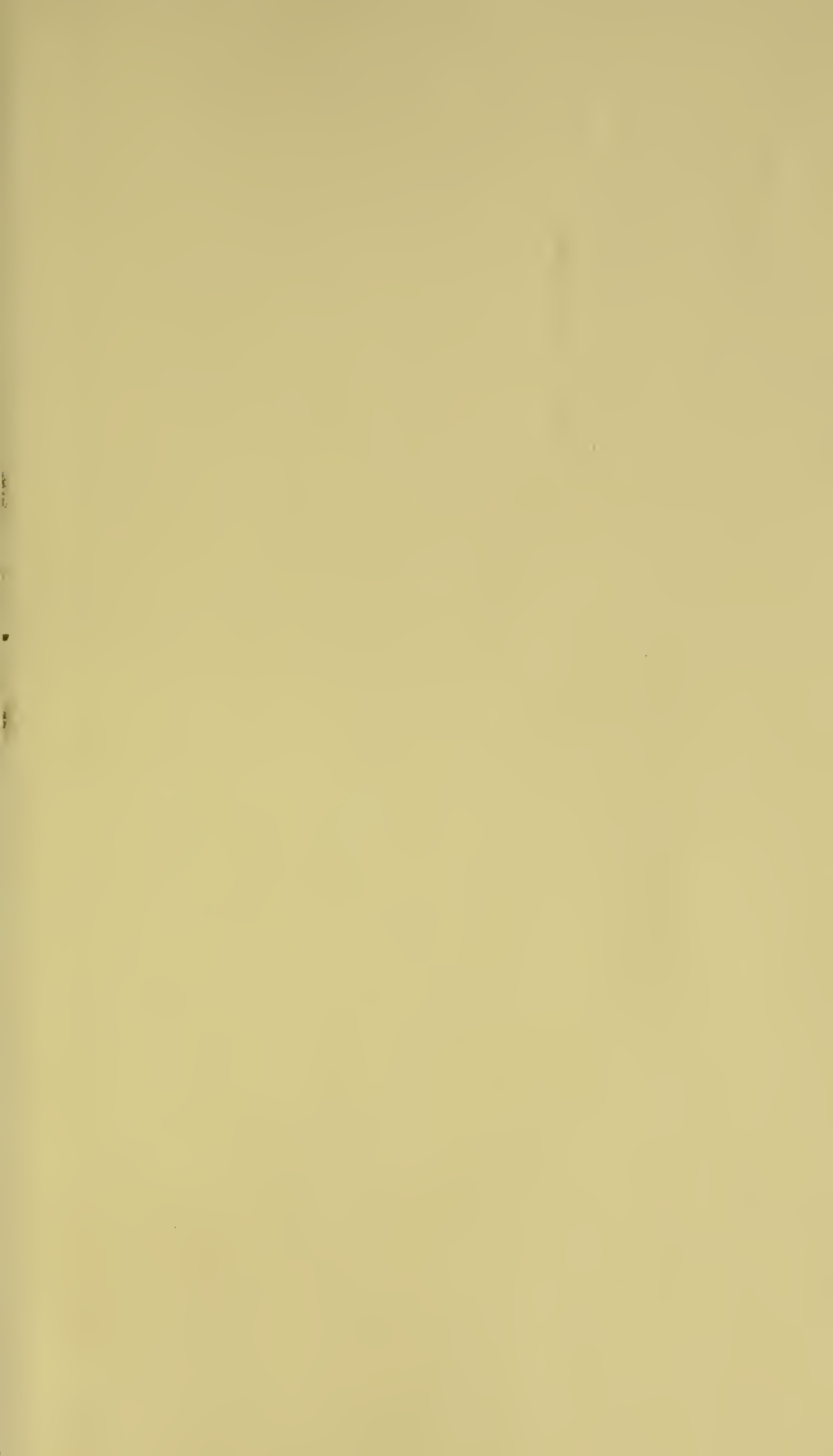
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